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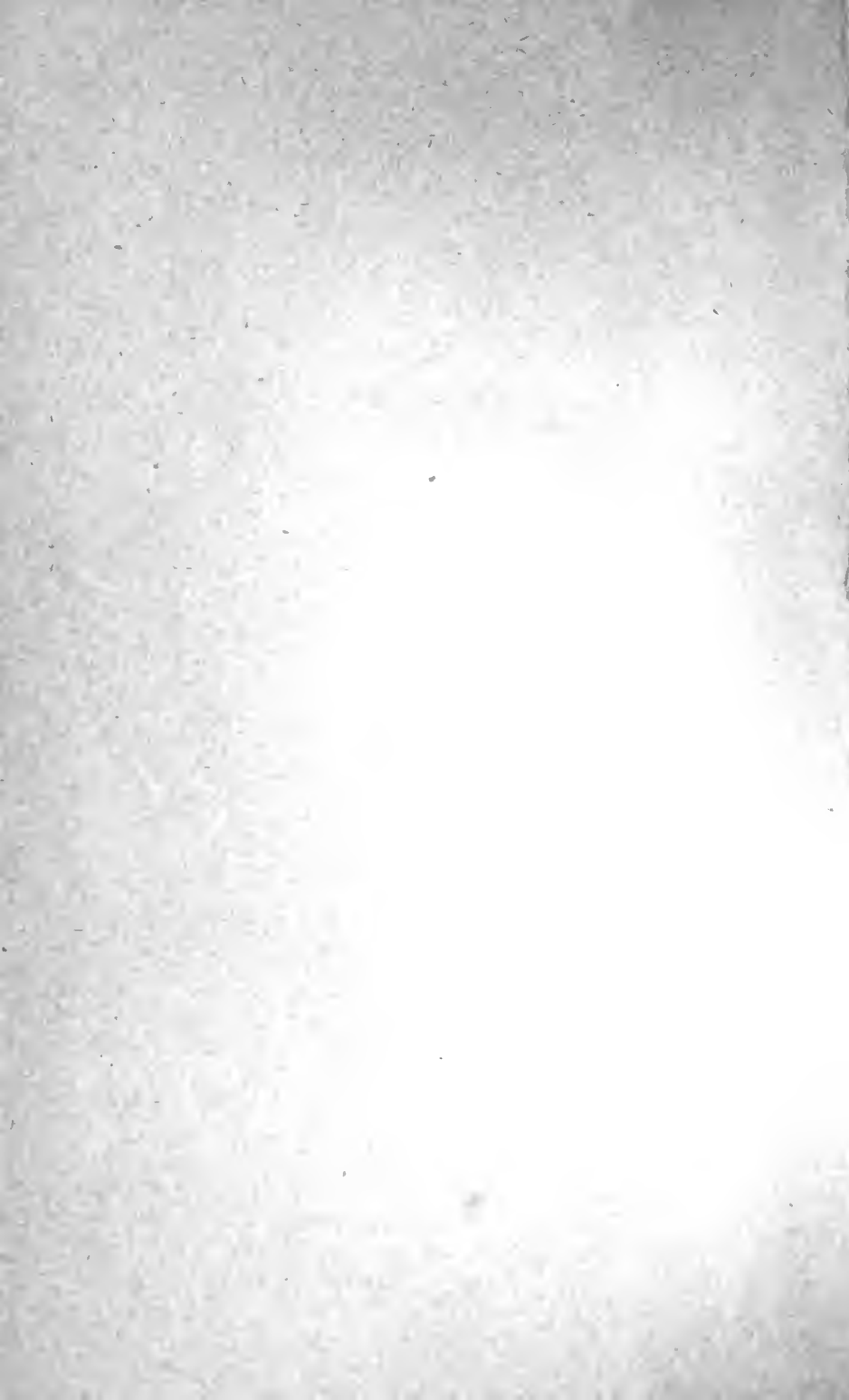
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THE COMING DAWN

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Anna Bella Romley

THE
COMING DAWN

And Other Poems

BY
LADY ARABELLA ROMILLY



London  HUTCHINSON AND CO.
Paternoster Row   1907

PREFACE

I N preparing this selection of poems by my wife for publication, I have thought it best to arrange them for the most part in order of date, even though this method is open to the objection that it entails placing her slighter and less matured work in the forefront, while her best productions do not appear until towards the middle and end of the book. My reason for adopting the chronological order was that there seemed to me to be three stages of development in the growth of the writer's poetical power. I have therefore divided the collection into three parts, representing approximately these three periods in her life.

The first part consists of a very small selection from a large number of early poems—mostly of a devotional nature—composed from the time when she was quite a young girl up to a year or two after her marriage in the year 1878.

Part II. contains her poetical writings during the first half of her married life up to the end of the year 1894, when she started for India on

a visit to her sister Lady Elgin; and Part III. those composed between that date and her death in February 1907.

Within the limits of the parts themselves I have not adhered strictly to order of date; but, while keeping to it generally, have attempted to arrange the poems more or less according to the nature of the subject-matter.

These few remarks by way of preface seemed to me to be called for lest the reader should be inclined to form his opinion of the collection as a whole after merely reading the earlier pieces, which naturally are of less intrinsic worth than those which follow, and represent the more matured powers of the writer. At the risk, however, of adverse criticism on this account, I felt that the collection would be somewhat incomplete without including a few specimens of the early work.

A few of the shorter pieces have already appeared from time to time in the pages of the *Westminster Gazette* and of the *Lady's Realm* magazine, and I wish to acknowledge with thanks my indebtedness to the Editors of these periodicals for permission to republish them now.

I should mention also the fact that a few of the poems had never been revised by my wife, and required some very slight alteration before publishing. In the delicate work of selection and editing, my sister-in-law Lady Helena Carnegie

has been of invaluable assistance to me, and my warmest thanks are due to her for her help. This labour of love has been carried out by us with the strictest regard to what we both knew would have been my wife's wishes and intentions. I am also deeply grateful to Sir Alfred Croft, K.C.I.E., who kindly, at my request, consented to read through the proof-sheets as they appeared, and offered many valuable suggestions and criticisms of the greatest help to me.

S. H. ROMILLY.

November 7, 1907.



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Dedications*

I

To the two or three who love me
 I give my book of song,
 Whose faithful hearts absolve me
 From any thought of wrong,
 Who cover all my failings
 With divinest charity.
 What in return? A little gift,
 But all the best of me.

To those who once have loved me,
 And now who love no more,
 I give no song from out a heart
 They have made sad and sore;
 To you, my loved ones, who outstretch
 Your healing hands to take
 Some of the burden from my life—
 These songs are for love's sake.

Just two or three; they understand,
 They need no word nor sign,
 But well they know their names are writ
 Deep in this heart of mine;
 So deeply that when death shall come
 To take my life away,
 The love-names are immortal
 Though the songs are of a day.

II

"In the faith that looks through death"

Shall I not give you of my best,
 The best of old and new ;
 The poetry of thoughts half guessed
 In twilight talks with you,
 The meaning of the unexpressed
 And therefore more heart-true ?

For to express in common phrase
 The manner of the thought
 Is but to walk in trodden ways,
 By others found and sought ;
 But sweeter far the tangled maze,
 The quest with mystery fraught !

These are the songs that tell of pain,
 Of failure and despair ;
 And yet, through all, the hopes remain
 That passion trained by prayer
 May lead to light, and fuller gain—
 Far off—beyond—elsewhere !

* These two dedications were written for two small series of poems, printed for private circulation only in the years 1890 and 1893. Almost all of those poems are included in the present volume.

PART I

Early Aspirations

(1870—1880)

The Coming Dawn

(A Refrain)

Do you not love the silent night,
 When the sounds are hush'd away,
 And nothing is left from the hours of light
 But the gleam of a coming day ?
 Across the hills of the distant east,
 The dawn of a coming day !

Do you not love the first red gleam,
 When night is fading away,
 Shining o'er wakening wood and stream,
 Setting the world at play ?
 Spreading and glowing over the hills
 At dawn of a coming day !

Say, shall you love that quiet hour—
 And come full soon it may—
 When the evening clouds begin to lower
 And hide your closing day ;
 And you know that night is coming on,
 And the dying of your day ?

Why should I fear that silent hour
 If One will be my stay ?
 Shall I not see a lovelier sight
 Than the dawn of earthly day ?
 For there will be breaking over the hills
 The dawn of Eternal Day.

To Constance

God perfects every soul through one
 Like to itself in sympathy,
 So that it may not stand alone ;
 Thus adding strength and harmony
 To what had else been all too frail
 To battle with this world of ours :
 So you supply me where I fail,
 As leaves protect the tender flowers.

My Sister, best and dearest friend,
 How could I live away from you ?
 On none besides could I depend,
 Or feel her to be half so true.
 O sweet blue eyes, that shine so bright
 Below the shade of hazel hair,
 Would I could turn me round to-night,
 And, turning, see them shining there !

Three Evenings and One Afternoon

Three evenings and one afternoon—
 'Twas all her life-time had to show,
 And after hopes, and fears, and woe—
 Three evenings and one afternoon.

She hardly dreamed of noons to be,
 She never thought of evenings spent ;
 She prized the moments as they went,
 The moments of the fatal three.

And that one afternoon the air
 Seemed sweeter, and the sun more bright,
 The lake was hid in golden light,
 And all was glory everywhere.

O cruel hours, to pass so soon !
 She wondered, as she felt the bliss,
 Could Paradise be more than this ?—
 Three evenings and one afternoon !

A Swan Song

What shall I leave to those I love
 And to the few I think love me ?
 So few they are that I might leave
 My all to two or three.

Even of those same two or three
 Will any weep when I am gone ?
 One little moment's grief and thrill—
 "How dark her grave, and lone !"

I'll choose not then to leave my love :
 They will not prize such legacy.
 Blessing I'll leave, and dying thanks
 For their kind thoughts of me.

Not much to leave—and yet perhaps
 Those two or three will sometimes say,
 "I wonder if she loves us yet,
 As when she went away."

Tout vient à qui sait attendre

Only be patient ; all will come
 To one who knoweth how to wait ;
 The wished-for, love-desired home—
 Ah ! yes, it cometh soon or late.

Ah ! yes, it cometh ; see the star
 Of hope in darkest clouds arise
 Ah ! yes, it cometh ; see from far
 The dawning red in eastern skies.

O my belovèd, we shall see,
 When all the weary years are o'er,
 How very sweet the days will be
 For you and me, for evermore.

To one Beloved

I think of thee, belovèd, all the day,
 And all the sleepless watches of the night ;
 And often, often do I kneel and pray
 That God in Heaven will keep thee in the right.

I wish for thee, my own belovèd one,
 All earthly blessings ; and if I could choose
 Between myself and thee, my choice alone
 'Twould be for thee ; the good I would refuse.

Nay, if an angel stood before me now,
 And said, "His life or thine, so it must be,"
 And there was no relenting on his brow,
 And cruel death at hand to seize on me,

Now in my youth, I would at once arise,
 And leave this life and all that makes it sweet,
 Though thou shouldst never know the sacrifice,
 Nor how I laid it gladly at thy feet.

Ah! gladly, for thy sake, but with regret;
 For might not coming years have given me thee?
 And as it is, a faded violet,
 A dead rose-leaf is all thou hast of me.

His Gift*

What shall I give to my heart's sweet friend?
 What can I tell her she does not know?
 What the best gift that I could send?
 What the best blessing I could bestow?

Shall I give thee love, my heart's sweet friend?
 Little or worthless it may be;
 But all that I had to give or lend
 Is lent and given, O Love, to thee!

I will give thee my trust, my utter faith;
 Trust from beginning, and trust unto end;
 Trust throughout life, and trust beyond death,—
 This will I give to my heart's sweet friend!

* "His Gift" was written in January 1870, "Her Gift" about nineteen years later

Her Gift

I promise not faith and trust, belovèd ;
 I promise not love from beginning to end :
 I have given my heart to you, belovèd,
 The heart of a woman, the heart of a friend.

And when the heart is wholly given,
 It means the best that words can say ;
 The best of all things under Heaven,
 Till Earth and Heaven pass away.

By the Sea

At eventide, at eventide,
 The world is lying calm and still ;
 From rock to rock the shadows glide,
 The sunset reddens all the hill,
 And gleaming waves on golden sea
 Bring back a long-past day to me.

At eventide, at eventide,
 Long days ago by sunlit sea,
 I see my darling at my side,
 Her hands in mine caressing me,
 And her soft voice seems evermore
 To come with waves upon the shore.

At morning tide, at morning tide,
 My best belovèd went away ;
 Ah, cruel death, to take my bride,
 So early, early in the day !
 Ah, weary morning, weary night,
 Alike to me is dark or light.

At eventide, at eventide,

I know that she will come for me,
Her soul will soothe mine, sorely tried,

And soft as murmur of the sea
Her voice will tell how she, my wife,
Will lead me on from Death to Life.

At morning tide, at morning tide !

Then surely on the hills of Heaven
Far lovelier lights and shades will glide,

Than ever to this earth are given ;
And she and I will, hand in hand,
Wander about the blessed Land.

PART II
Later Years
(1881—1894)

A Quarry Garden

Nestled away in an old spent quarry
 Planted with ivy, and myrtle, and rose,
 Far from the world, and the glare, and the hurry,
 Broods an eternal and calm repose,
 Over a garden, where those who enter
 Speak soft, move softly through flowery ways,
 And a sun-dial set in the yew-decked centre
 Records in shadow the passing days.

And here the myrtle-tree blossoms for lovers,
 With the purple flowers by love caressed,
 And the calm of ages over it hovers,
 And the weight of the present is hushed to rest :
 Could it not tell of love-words spoken,
 Of hearts that were taken all unaware,
 Of light young laughter, and light vows broken,
 And lives gone out in a long despair ?

Softly we enter. Enchanted garden,
 Throw o'er our spirits your magic spell,
 For many an unseen angel warden
 Stands at your gateway to guard it well.
 We will learn your secret among the flowers—
 The violet blossoms that bloom and die—
 To remember awhile a few sweet hours
 When time stood still, and the world went by.

The Quarry Garden

(Afterwards)

(Written seven years later)

Dimmed the late sunshine which lighted my garden,
 Purple sweet flowers have faded away ;
 As the hearts that were tender now wither and
 harden,
 So my garden of roses has died with the day.

Wild autumn winds have swept over the bowers,
 Whirling the crimson leaves over the grass ;
 Wild autumn rainings have dashed down the flowers,
 So the summer of all things must weary and pass.

Will the spring winds revive and awaken the blossom,
 Renew the ripe splendour of bower and of tree ?
 Will forget-me-nots smile from their Mother Earth's
 bosom,
 And the heliotrope fling forth its sweetness to me ?

I know not. I dream of a far-distant summer,
 When the garden will brighten for sad hearts that
 wait ;
 When the rose-laden breezes will welcome each
 comer ;—
 Ah ! it may be that one of them cometh too late.

A Northern Home

There is a home by northern seas,
 And not the softest summer breeze,
 Sweeping o'er myrtle-scented isle,
 Could my sad heart one hour beguile
 From that calm home by northern seas.

Cloud-laden skies at evening time,
 As lovely as in southern clime ;
 The sun sinks to its evening sleep,
 And all the lands in shadow keep
 Their silence till the morning time.

O quiet garden ! Overhead
 The shadowy branches, widely spread,
 Shelter the paths where we have trod
 Alone beneath grey skies and God ;
 Garden with Heaven overhead !

Sweet sister, when we two shall come
 Once more together in a home
 Which is not earth, God grant that we
 May feel salt breezes from a sea
 Not wholly crystal ; and o'erhead
 The branches of a woodland spread
 Across a sky whose blue is grey,
 As toward the closing of the day
 The clouds hung in our northern home.

From a Window

Ah ! could I tell how I love the sunset,
 As I lie in my chamber, calm and still !
 There is first the moorland, and then the river,
 And then the hill.

Over that hill the clouds go sweeping ;
 Over the river, sun-lit and fair,
 The swan-white boats go sailing, sailing
 For ever there.

Let me go sailing, sailing, sailing
 Onward past woodland and moorland and hill,
 Till I reach an inlet which leads through lilies
 To waters still.

Let me go floating, floating onward,
 For within that haven all sorrows cease ;
 Let me go onward, call me not backward
 From perfect peace !

And floating still down that endless river,
 Floating woodland and moorland by,
 As in a dream, without end or waking,
 Good night—Good-bye !

To Constance

Though you may have days of darkness,
 And weary hours of pain,
 Yet I know that the light will last for you,
 And the heart-joy remain.

For you are one of the lovely ones
 Who live in the smile of Heaven,
 To whom the especial gift of grace,
 And the love-gift are given.

Felicity

My little daughter ! dearest, youngest born,
 Ah ! could I tell what fate awaiteth thee,
 To whom I gave the happy-omened name,
 The sweetest of all names—Felicity !
 Was it defiance, flung with recklessness
 Into the face of certain destiny,
 Bidding that one, at least, on weary earth,
 Should have a life all, all felicity ?
 My baby ! with thy life-defying smile,
 With sweet, dark eyes, looking out wistfully ;
 O, my belovèd ! would thy mother's hand
 Could make thy life one long felicity !
 And if, perchance, in some strange after-life,
 I meet one soul, most beautiful to see,
 Shall I remember, by her happy eyes,
 That she is one I called Felicity ?

Affinity

I always "have been half in love with Death,"
 And now I care not when he comes to me ;
 For I am sure that fuller, freer breath
 We shall attain to in Eternity,
 And those we love be with us constantly
 And those with whom we have affinity.
 Ah, God ! in pity, only let this be !

Disquietude

Oh say, shall we whose souls are vexed,
 Disquieted, and all in vain,
 Over life's failures and its pain,
 With faith and reason all perplexed,
 Shall we, when this short life is o'er,
 Find the solution after death
 In fuller life, in freer breath,
 And understanding evermore ?

Or will it be one long, still sleep,
 After the turmoil and the care
 Which seemed too hard for us to bear ?
 For those who sow in tears, nor reap
 The harvest of their lives oppressed,
 To them 'twere well to lie so still,
 With never fear of hurt or ill,
 But evermore an endless rest.

Or shall we meet there face to face
 All those who love, or those who miss
 On earth fruition of their bliss,
 Nor ever find life's crowning grace,
 And those who failed in struggles past,
 And those who bore the cruel sneer
 Of some who once had held them dear ?
 Will it be love and light at last ?

Ah ! who can answer ? From above
 In each sad heart perchance it lies—
 The hope that unrealities
 May waken up to Truth and Love.
 But whether it is all in vain,
 Or whether evermore to be,
 Cling closer to those two or three
 Who love, while Life and Love remain.

Sans Réponse

She left but the name of her beauty,
 And the glint of her golden hair,
 And long, long since she has left my side,
 And climbed that heavenly stair ;
 And far away in another land,
 I dream she is waiting there.

But oh, for the lonely ones who wait !
 And oh, for the lonely hours !
 And oh, for the thorns and briars that strew
 The path that led through flowers !
 And oh, for a hand that was clasped in mine,
 In days that once were ours !

My hands stretch up to the star-lit sky,
 And I wonder if she is there ;
 And I pray for a sight of her face in dreams,
 In passionate midnight prayer !
 I pray—but the answer cometh not—
 And the pleading passes—where ?

Aspirations

A little span of hope and aspirations,
 A little span of love, and hate, and pain,
 Aimless and nameless, numberless vexations,
 Then nothingness again.

Oh, for some spirit-hand from out oblivion,
 To stand by me, and take my hand and say,
 "Belovèd, here is night and desolation :
 Beyond is light and day !"

Michaelmas Daisies

(Whose meaning is "After-thoughts")

I

When we remember some belovèd friend,
 Whose gentle hands have helped to cheer our way,
 And, looking back, in the long afternoons
 That linger, ere the twilight of our day,
 We think upon her tenderness and love,
 Perchance for ever passed from out our sight—
 These are dear after-thoughts, which we recall
 With the long shadows of the evening light.

II

Sadly, sadly come the autumn mornings ;
 Faded roses, dying mignonette ;
 Nothing in the grey and gloomy gardens
 But autumn daisies and sweet violet,
 The waking of a sleep-forgotten sorrow
 And the memory of an old regret.
 Dear, grave flowers ! tell me of some morrow
 Where the summer flowers may blossom yet
 And all the gladness of the past days borrow,
 Now the autumn ways are wild and wet.

Kind after-thoughts, which come when hope is fled,
 Laying your living fingers on the dead !

Grey Eyes

She seemed like a dream from beyond the skies,
 The light of another day :
 She lifted on me her grey, sad eyes,
 And looked my heart away ;
 Alas, dear love !
 She looked my heart away.

And nothing is left but bitter moan,
 And dull unceasing pain,
 For her heart is cold as the beryl stone,
 And mine is mine again ;
 Alas, dear love !
 My heart is mine again.

November Year

What did you say, when we two parted,
 Holding my hands so close and long ;
 With the dreary look of the brokenhearted,
 After you sang me that good-bye song ?

Do you remember how you prayed me
 Never to mar my life for you ?
 How you should never in thought upbraid me,
 Never believe me unkind, untrue ?

Do you remember we two sat waiting,
 Side by side in that shadowy room,
 And each could hear how each heart was beating,
 And each was dreading a lifelong doom ?

How I prayed you give me, do you remember,
 Just as we parted—that good-bye kiss ?
 It was then November, and now November ;
 Darling ! do you remember this ?

A Song

*" The word it makes our eyes afraid
 To know that each is thinking of."*
Rossetti.

Look in my eyes, my friend, for they will tell you
 All that my tongue can never, never say ;
 Look in my eyes ! Nay, if those eyes repel you
 I ask no more, but turn them quite away.

But look once more, my friend ; do they not answer
 All that the look in your eyes tells to me ?
 But do they tell you ? You shall never answer,
 We will live on in Love's uncertainty.

But is it Love ? and what is Love ? and dare we
 Withdraw the veil from off your eyes and mine ?
 Leave it a question never answered : are we
 But very human, or one half divine !

Good-bye

I have not been afraid to say good-bye !
 You have not said it. Will you send one sigh,
 Regretting our past friendship ? Now, good-bye !
 The shadow of our past lay on each heart.
 It is not very easy, now, to part
 And say, "Good-bye, good-bye again, sweetheart."
 Each to the other was a passing dream,
 Making the winter like a garden seem,
 A garden where the sad day-lilies gleam.
 Sad lilies, blooming but a day, good-bye !
 Red poppies, dying quickly down, good-bye !
 Leaving sweet memories, nothing more, good-bye !

From Heine

Ah, Love, alone together,
 In a frail, small boat,
 Heart close to heart, o'er waters wide,
 In the still night, afloat.

The beautiful spirit-island
 Lies dim in moonlight clear,
 We hear the magic music,
 The mystic dance is near.

We, Love, alas ! unheeding
 That tender melody,
 Are drifting, drifting—whither ?
 Into what silent sea ?

Farewell

(From Heine)

When two who love are parting,
 Alas, for all the tears !
 Alas, for all the murmurings
 Against the coming years !

When we two parted, dearest,
 We gave no sob nor sigh,
 For life was all before us,
 With the heart-break of good-bye.

The Witch

Three bitter things Fate gave to me
 Wherewith my joy in life was killed :
 The dream of ideality,
 The promise of it ne'er fulfilled ;
 Eyes to bewitch, yet eyes to see.

With these bewitching eyes I win
 All hearts awhile, then they are gone,
 Not having dared look further down
 Into those depths, lest they should drown—
 Not I, forsooth ! in reckless sin.

Just for one desperate moment I
 Have longed to let some serpent wile
 My heart to his—for once to lie
 In lover's arms a little while—
 And then forget it all, and die.

But these deep-seeing eyes of mine
 Look through men's souls, and long to make,
 With words like bitterest salt-sea brine,
 Their tortured hearts for mine to ache,
 Perchance to break—or mine to break.

Dreamland

In the sad music of my life
 One hand has gently touched the strings ;
 She is not friend, nor love, nor wife,
 Yet midst the turmoil and the strife
 In sleep her soul and mine take wings,
 And, for short spaces, lose their way
 Where spirits into dreamland stray.

We have awakened from our dreaming ;
 Her soul from mine has passed away,
 Alas, perchance, no longer deeming
 Me worthy of her sweet redeeming
 From the dark pathways where I stray ;
 Yet, of all things that were or seem,
 The one thing real was that dream !

White Poppies of Sleep

*"White poppies round, that she might keep
A dreamless sleep."*

She lay in her death chamber, still ;
And I, who loved her, could be glad
The world had seen her laugh at will,
And only knew her eyes were sad.

I looked at her, and no one stood
Beside me ; best alone with her.
She was so fair, it seemed she would
Smile, and the close-shut eyelids stir.

I kissed her for our long farewell ;
My tears had fallen on her eyes.
"Love ! let the tears lie as they fell,
To kiss them off in Paradise."

Lost Paradise

It is no use for any mortal
To seek on earth ideal bliss ;
It went away from Eden's bower
With Lilith's kiss.

For one sweet moment, those who find it
Find something more than Heaven gives,
But then, perchance, the glory passes,
Or, if it lives,

Then through the love-joy and the laughter,
The happy smiles in happy eyes,
God looks, and drives the thoughtless lovers
From Paradise.

Looking Back

Orpheus arose, and took his lute,
 Knowing of old its magic spell,
 And journeyed for a weary space,
 To where the dead men dwell.

And when he reached the darksome land,
 And sat him down awhile to play,
 It seemed to those benighted souls,
 'Twas once more light and day.

Mothers reached up their cold white hands
 To children left in happy earth,
 And lovers, through the tender strains,
 Remembered love and mirth.

And the belov'd Eurydice,
 Rose without either smile or tear,
 Passionless and companionless :
 For what should Love do here ?

She caught the music of the past,
 Quick gliding through the silent gloom
 To where the King of Hades sat,
 In that strange darkened room.

Still the bewitching melody
 Strayed on, and on, and broke the spell
 Of Death, the Lord Omnipotent
 Of those dim shades of Hell.

All silently she floated on,
 Following the magic melody,
 Hiding her face with spirit hands,
 Lest Orpheus turn and see.

So closely following her belov'd,
 The lost life seemed to rise in breath,
 And heart-beats, as if never touched
 By the cold hand of Death.

“ Ah ! look not now ! ” she softly said ;
 “ For, oh, what tongue could ever tell
 The sharpness of a second death,
 A second time—farewell ? ”

They two had climbed the stair of Hell,
 And through the widely opened door
 The sunshine of the earth streamed down,
 As in the days before.

All through the music now there rang
 Such ecstasy of longing pain ;
 Ah, could he but a moment turn,
 And see her face again !

Longing of love, and yet of dread,
 Lest she should be less wondrous fair,
 Lest Death had darkened her sweet eyes,
 Or dimmed her golden hair.

One look ! Then those despairing cries
 Of unavailing grief and pain.
 O bitterest pang, to grasp the love,
 And lose it all again !

Amour Mystérieux

A love by none forbidden,
 Because a love that's hidden,
 Like violets under snow ;
 A love unguessed, unchidden,
 A love that none might know.

A love that all may see
 Is not for you nor me,
 Too sweet, too fair to blame ;
 This love, my love, that we
 Feel only, do not name.

Ask not for more than this,
 Nor word, nor smile, nor kiss,
 Nor more from me ;
 What might for both have been
 Had fate not stepped between
 Love and felicity !

Soul-Love

I may not tell you of my love,
 Nor you of yours for me ;
 Only I know that both of us
 Have missed our destiny.
 Yet who shall say we have not joys
 Beyond all sense and sight,
 When your soul meets with my soul,
 In the watches of the night ?

Only to lead each other up
 The steep and climbing stairs ;
 Only to let our separate thoughts
 Unite in separate prayers ;
 And who shall say the prayers may not
 Together take their flight,
 When your soul dreams of my soul,
 In the dead time of the night ?

This is the soul's communion !
 There is no time, nor space
 In such celestial union ;
 But God grant in His grace
 That in that diviner kingdom,
 In unspeakable delight,
 Your soul may meet with my soul,
 Wakening from the night.

“ Enfin Seuls ! ”

(Ideas taken from “ Le Rendez-vous,” by Sully Prudhomme)

Here at last, in the hush of the wild wood,
 Forgotten and lost from the glare of day,
 Rest in the silence with me, beloved,
 Hidden away.

Wearry enough of life and fighting,
 Weary of words, and the world's rude din,
 Even too weary to speak, beloved,
 Love to win.

I know, by your smile, how you understand me ;
 Just to lie in the calm, and rest
 With closed eyes, feeling the sun smite through
 them,

This is best.

Only knowing you close beside me,
 Your white hands folded as if in prayer,
 Like two who sleep on old church tomb-stones,
 Graven fair.

So would I rest throughout the ages,
 Close beside you, and never a word !
 Nothing to break the death-still silence,
 But song of bird.

Now and again, perchance, my dearest,
 Open my sleepful eyes, to see
 You always by me and dreaming—dreaming
 Of love and me.

Alone at last—ah ! the footsteps passing
 Never will turn by this lonely way ;
 Only the moonbeams, only the sunbeams,
 Night and day.

This is the rest I have longed for, dreamed of :
 Look at me once, for my good-night kiss ;
 What were the triumphs of earth's ambitions,
 Love, to this ?

“Quand Même”

What if my life be all undone,
And all things false below the sun ?
Yet still I have been true to one,
Most passionately true !

What if all hearts be shut to me,
And I, alone, must wait and see
How out of pain the good will be
Divinely, purely true ?

What if a lonely path I tread,
Between the green graves of the dead,
Still will I trust that, overhead,
God, and His Heaven, are true !

What if my heart must surely ache,
Under the loneliness, or break !
Oh, let me trust I shall awake
To Heaven, to peace—to you !

Fire and Snow

I wish it were only a year ago,
When you were the fire, and I the snow.
But how does it fare with my heart's desire,
Now you are the snow and I the fire ?

A year ago ! it was passing sweet
To know you were laying your heart at my feet,
And to read in the light of your loving eyes,
I had won, unwooing, a priceless prize !

And alas, and alas ! you woke in my soul
 A passion, a love beyond control ;
 And yet, it was scarcely a year ago
 That you were the fire, and I the snow.

Loyalty

They two alone one summer day :
 " Ah, love," she said, " is hard to lose."
 " And harder still," he said, " to say
 The bitter words, that you must choose
 Between the lover of to-day,
 And the true friend of yesterday."

She murmured, " Love is sweet to win ;
 And having won, how sweet to keep !
 To know that very close within
 Lieth a love that doth not sleep."
 And, with her eyes all soft and dim,
 She from her cushions looked at him.

And he stood still a little space,
 Loving the pleading of her voice ;
 And, bending down, he kissed her face—
 " 'Tis but awhile you would rejoice
 In love that bids us turn away
 From being friends of yesterday.

" O Love, beloved ! tempt me not,
 I love you to the depth of sin ;
 I would it had but been our lot,
 Sooner to meet and love to win :
 Now this is all that I can say,
 Dear Love, be strong for both to-day ! "

"Ah, yes!" she answered sweet through sighs,
 "Forgive me that I failed you then;
 Were't not for our infirmities,
 There were no victories to gain.
 I put the human love away
 To keep my friend of yesterday."
 "O Love!" he answered, "Souls are strong;
 But passion knows not more than this,—
 Forgetful of all thought and wrong,
 To clasp you closer, kiss by kiss!"
 "Ah, yes—dear, yes! love of to-day;
 But not the love that lasts away!"

A Reproach

Thou hast ordered all my goings,
 And dispersed my company;
 Thou hast overlooked my doings,
 Now, what dost thou want of me?
 Thou hast not lifted my burden,
 Nor rolled the stones away,
 Though the rocks seem ever to harden
 In the heat and dust of the day.
 Thou hast bid me climb to Heaven,
 But thou dost not climb with me;
 What hast thou done or given
 For all I've left for thee?
 Alone, I have passed through fire,
 Alone, through a bitter sea,
 And trodden on thorn and briar;
 Now, what dost thou want of me?

Thou hast bid me trample on beauty,
 And love, and all sweet to me,
 And walk in the path of duty,
 Without the help of thee ;

Thou hast bid me to-day and to-morrow
 Work out my destiny ;
 Thou hast given me pain and sorrow !
 What have I not given thee ?

A Star

I would rather go from your sight for ever,
 Hide me away in an unknown spot,
 My life from yours irretrievably sever,
 Leaving you, loving you, murmuring not ;
 Rather than live and rake the embers,
 Of a fire burnt down, and a love-day dead ;
 For who that has loved and wearied remembers
 The clasp, the kisses, the love-words said ?
 I would rather leave you before than after,
 While the love is there, and the souls are strong ;
 Rather you thought of my happy laughter,
 Knowing my faith had lasted long ;

Rather you said, " I love a woman,
 And love has made her a snow-white saint,
 Taken away the touch of the human,
 Leaving a lily without a taint."
 Rather you thought, " She has soared above me ;
 But I know that beyond the highest star,
 The soul of that woman will find and prove me,
 And love me near as she loved afar ! "

“She hath done what she could”

She had been with you in sorrow,
 And watched in that dark day
 When the dawning of the morrow
 Could bring no brighter ray,
 When the hush of death lay o’er the house,
 And the sight of snow-white flowers
 Could only deeper anguish rouse
 In those despairing hours.

She had shared each dim foreboding ;
 She had longed to bear her part,
 And lighten care corroding
 From every mourning heart.
 She never asked for words of praise,
 Or thanks for duty done,
 But craved for love to light her days,—
 Her sorrows were her own.

You gave her back her love with scorn,
 Hard words and cruel tone ;
 Ashes and dust for oil and corn,
 A serpent, and a stone.
 Now for the first time you may call,
 And she will not attend ;
 She cannot answer you at all,
 Nor help nor foe nor friend.

Oh ! only think of her as one
 A failure in earth’s prison ;
 Her soul, too tired of loneliness,
 At last to peace has risen ;

But not too far to recognise,
 And, holding out her hand,
 Look in your eyes with gentle eyes :
 " In Heaven we understand."

With New Year Violets

I send thee violets, beloved flowers,
 Beloved alike to living and to dead ;
 And all the breath of spring, the joy of showers,
 Lie hidden in them, from the cold earth fled.
 And with them come the thoughts of many years,
 The blessed dreams of immortality,
 The hope we may not ever parted be,
 E'en with good-bye to life, and pains, and tears,
 The wish that that which each to each endears
 Still be with thee, O friend, and still with me.

The Message of the Flowers

I

The heliotrope for memory !
 When all is dead and gone of me
 'Tis sweet to fancy you will say :
 " I often think of her, and pray ;
 God rest her, dead and gone."

The violet for constancy !
 This be your dearest thought of me :
 " She gave me faith ; I know that she,
 If memory lingers, thinks of me,
 Where she is, dead and gone."

II

The Edelweiss for mystery !
 " O Edelweiss for all and me,
 No hand could pluck from snow and ice
 My lonely, star-like Edelweiss !
 (And she is dead and gone !)"
 " O red, red flower of love's own heart,
 How come you here to bear your part,
 Beside the flowers of rest and calm ?"
 " What, deem ye not I bear the palm ?
 Passion, idealised by pain,
 That cometh once and not again,
 Now she is dead and gone ! "

The Two Kisses

The first kiss that the mother lays
 Upon her first-born's lips and eyes,
 Lingers through all the coming days
 Like a soft breath of Paradise.
 Nothing can utterly efface
 The blessing of the mother's kiss,
 While, mingling tenderly with this,
 Christ's cross is signed upon its face.
 The last kiss that the lover lays—
 Last kiss of passion and of pain—
 On lips that answer his again,
 But may no more in after days.
 Oh, memory of the mother's kiss,
 Close pressed on the unconscious lips,
 Redeem the agony of this,
 The dark despair of love's eclipse.

The Baby-Boy

They laid my baby in a grave,
 And heaped the cold earth over him;
 His sister sheddeth many a tear,
 His father's eyes are very dim.

His little brother calls and cries
 From morning sun to evening grey,
 He lies unanswered on the grass,—
 Unheeded frets in baby-way.

And I! How strange I have no tears,
 No prayers, and no despairing moan!—
 Because my heart went with my boy,
 And is wherever he has gone.

In Memoriam .

(Lady Charlotte Elliot, died 1880)

She, when she left us, turned again and smiled,
 And gently said to me:
 "Some of my gift of song, beloved child,
 I have bequeathed to thee!

"Ah, take it ; but the pain and loneliness
 Must also fall on thee;
 Thou, too, shalt find, through loss and weariness,
 How to endure, and see

"That only through our deepest sufferings,
 Such souls as thine and mine
 Must reach, through earth's worst disillusionings,
 God's rest and peace divine."

To a Poet Soul

(Lady Charlotte Elliot)

Oh, if my highest notes could reach
 Thy lowest notes!—But how should I
 Learn what no mortal skill can teach,
 The higher heights of poesy?

And how should I, who, from afar,
 Still follow where thy footsteps lead,
 Mount upwards to that distant star
 Where thou must be in very deed?

For to the soul the earth-dust clings
 When life has still its years to run;
 But thou ere now hast spread thy wings
 Beyond the stars—beyond the sun.

I know thou canst not leave thy rest,
 Where'er, whatever it may be,
 But couldst thou on my heart oppressed,
 Send down one thought to comfort me,

Then I might hope to win my way—
 Not to thy heights or thy renown—
 But one day at thy feet to lay
 The homage of a lesser crown.

The Boat

To the small boat which God sped in the morning
 With swan-white sails upon the quiet sea,
 What gathering clouds above gave any warning
 Of coming perils or of storms to be?

And when the threatening of a summer shower
 Fell with great drops upon the fair white deck,
 There still was not a thought of darker hour,
 And no forecasting of a storm or wreck.

Forced on her way without a hope of haven,
 With broken sails before the tempest's will,
 Was there no charm to hush the wind's wild raving,
 Never a voice to bid the waves be still ?

The waters rise and fall and close above her,
 One torn white sail left floating on the wave ;
 Only the buried shells and weeds discover
 The secret of that ship's eternal grave.

Presentiment

It has come to me strangely and calmly,
 Here by the winter sea,
 That swiftly my days are passing by,
 And death drawing near to me.

How trivial and poor seem the troubles
 Which over my life held sway ?
 Now a creeping calm, like the creeping tide,
 Assuages my soul away.

I believe in the dim Hereafter ;
 I feel, in the shadowy Land,
 That the eyes that loved me well on earth
 Will love me and understand.

The ideal I sought so vainly,
 The ideal of love and peace,
 Will be mine when the worst has worked its will
 And the clamouring voices cease.

Sorrow and I

O Sorrow, when I met thee first,
I deemed thee cruel and accurst ;
I turned away and hid my face,
Seeing in thee nor love nor grace ;
Asking for nothing but to be
Rid of thy hated company.

For not as one to pause and rest
An hour as welcomed friend and guest,
But as companion of my life,
Closer than husband, lover, wife,
Has Sorrow come. And she must be
For evermore my company.

Here as long days pass slowly by,
We sit together, she and I.
Almost I think that I have grown
Her strange enthralling power to own,
Wondering if Happiness could be
Such sympathetic company.

Like the soft lull of summer breeze
Among the leafy-laden trees,
Or soothing of the poppied sleep,
Dreamless, and beautiful, and deep,
Deep calm—because all hope is dead,
Deep peace—because all strife has fled ;
While Sorrow whispers she will be
For evermore my company.

To the Madonna of Consolation

Mother of Christ, Mother of Consolation,
 Whose hands uplifted, and whose eyes of peace,
 Admit that thou hast found through tribulation
 The way to that calm sphere where passions
 cease,
 Pray for me, Mother ! for thy suffering daughter,
 Who has forgotten every prayer but one !
 Who cannot learn what sorrow should have taught
 her—
 That every soul must bear its pain alone.

Day and Night

Day with his golden eyes sheds light too dazzling
 To spy into the corners of the earth,
 And hardly listens to the Night's grim stories,
 But like a pagan god breaks forth in mirth.
 All the fair hours he heeds not the low wailing
 Rising to God from sorely stricken souls,
 The anguish of the trampled poor, the fury
 As Time's broad river ever onward rolls.

Night knows, and vainly whispers to the morning
 The record of the wrongs, the tears, the sins ;
 She counts the hours of that long flow of suffering,
 And notes how year by year the evil wins.
 Oh cry aloud, thou Angel of the Darkness !
 Clasp in thy mighty wings the careless Day !
 Whisper no more, but cry to him to hearken,
 And burn with God's sun-fire the sin away.

Vain prayer, vain hope ! for still, with laugh un-
heeding,

Day listens not to what the Night-time knows ;
And still Time's river rolls for ever onwards,
And Night gives darkness but denies repose.

My Garden

I have a little garden set
With lavender and mignonette ;
And here my sun-dial stands, to mark
The dawning of each day from dark ;
And here—as Beatrice, pictured fair,
The strong light shining on her hair,
Closing her eyes in death's repose,
While on her hands the white dove throws
The longed-for poppy flowers of sleep,—
So I my tryst with Death would keep,
Beside my garden's sun-dial stone
Like Dante's Beatrice—alone.

My garden of sweet dreams and fancies,
Of lilies tall and purple pansies ;
Of rosemary for remembering
The love of many a bygone spring ;
Of roses, under whose leaves spread,
I hid away my last dream, dead,—
Were it not best to pass away
In evening hour of quiet day,
Alone among my gentle flowers,
Who comforted my lonely hours,
And blessed me, as such beings bless
With their exceeding loveliness ?

Alone ! in one swift moment pass,
 Leaving no shadow on the grass
 Where oft my earthly form had shed
 Its shadow on each garden bed ;
 All unattended, without prayer
 Uttered beside me—anywhere
 Into the flowerless, strange unknown ;
 Alone—still in God's hands—alone !

For a Sun-dial

"Post tenebras lucem spero"

Glad in the promise of new day from night
 I raise my sun-dial, hoping for that light
 Which cometh after darkness, when for me
 Earth's sun has set this side eternity.

Rose-leaves

As one lays out the rose-leaves one by one,
 To wither and fade in the light of the sun,
 So I lay out my heart to wither and die,
 Trusting that peace may come thereby.

'Tis a pinch and a pain to extract one thorn,
 'Tis anguish and moan when the child is born,
 'Tis by cruellest pain the soul is shriven,
 And only through torture can enter Heaven.

From a Dream

As in a vision nor waking nor sleeping,
 I, in a chamber, tapestried, old,
 Watched how the sunlight played on the garden,
 Watched the glad promise of blossom unfold.

Starlike the jasmine looked in by the lattice,
 Fragrance from lily beds stealing to me
 Soothed my sad senses to rest, while for ever
 Murmured the waves of the near summer sea.

Softly there crept o'er my hands, lying folded,
 Delicate touches, while words scarcely said
 Fell on my ears as I lay in the silence—
 Touches and whispers, and sighs of the dead.

Then I saw her before me, pale, clad in a fashion
 Of women long dead and buried away
 For centuries over, and she was beside me,
 With the pearls on her neck, and her garment of
 grey.

“Here in this chamber,” she whispered, “at evening,
 Leaning my arms on the casement, my tears
 Fell on the flowers, and they withered. Will nothing
 Wipe from my soul the sin of those years?”

“Fear me not, chide me not ; only I pray you,
 Just for the sake of your loves passed away,
 Pray that I too may have rest and oblivion !
 Pray !” she besought me most mournfully, “Pray !”

Up from the flower-beds floated the fragrance ;
 At the foot of the cliff I heard the waves break ;
 Oh if earth be so fair, why must life be despairing,
 And even in death hearts be human and ache ?

So I held out my arms to my beautiful phantom,
 With the pearls on her neck and the garment of
 grey,
 But even as I clasped her, she faded and left me,
 And waking, I heard but her last murmured
 "Pray . . ."

A Vanished Star

An angel woman loved a mortal
 With that sweet love which is of earth,
 And yet not wholly forgetful
 Of heavenly birth.

She stood above him in a cloudland,
 Shrouded in veils of mysteries ;
 And scarce he dared believe the message
 Of her fair eyes.

And as his soul in adoration
 Lay evermore before her feet,
 The image of that angel woman
 Made life more sweet.

Still striving, ever striving upwards,
 To touch but her white garment's hem
 (For in such wise do angel women
 Draw souls to them),

He longed that she should stoop from Heaven,
And yet he feared to see her bend,
Knowing how oft in closer union
Ideals end.

She was most lonely in her dreamland,
Her spirit pined for human love—
For those dear human words and touches
Unknown above.

And thus she bent her, lower, lower,
Until his hands had clasped her own,
And her high soul had learnt to echo
His earthlier tone.

No more aloof in lofty regions,
One moment's rapture taught him this :
That years of worship count as nothing
By one love-kiss.

More loved a thousand times as woman,
No longer worshipped from afar—
But does the man regret at moments
His vanished star?

A Legend of Lost Eden

(Eve, on leaving Eden, asked the Angel for one rose. Her request was granted, and evermore her descendants smell the fragrance of that rose once in their lives.)

“ One rose—but one ! ” “ O Eve, thou art so fair.

How can I look on thee and say thee nay ?

How turn unheeding from thy gentle prayer,

Passing for ever from thy home to-day ? ”

At this the Angel, hidden by the fire

Of the great swords that guarded Paradise,

Moved by the passion of her lovely eyes,

Gave her one rose—the rose of her desire.

What hast thou given us, Eve, in after days,

Thy sons and daughters ? Unavailing tears,

And toilsome wanderings in untrodden ways ;

But once in all the overmastering years,

To breathe the perfume of that deathless flower ;

Once, only for one moment, understand

What were the wonders of that unknown land,

What the lost secret of the Eden bower !

The Lady of the Rose

What did the lady who plucked the rose

Say as she went away ?

“ Oh, ask me not, my dearest ones,

Here on this earth to stay.”

And then she lifted with one hand

Her snow-white garment's hem,

For her long gown trailed upon the grass

As she took leave of them.

With one white hand she held the rose,
 With the other her long white gown ;
 On her sweet face there was no trace
 Of smile, or tear, or frown.

“ Have you no message or behest
 For those who are not here ?
 For those who of all women born
 Have held you the most dear ?

“ It is a long way you must go,
 And you must go alone—
 Do you not fear with all your sins
 To face God on His throne ? ”

“ I do not fear, with all my sins,
 For they are long forgiven ;
 And the path of love, though a bitter path,
 Is a path may lead to Heaven.”

“ But there is one who will not let
 You go without a word ;
 And should he knock at Heaven’s gate
 He surely would be heard.

“ E’en were the angels standing round
 With widely outspread wings
 Would he not thrust them all aside ?—
 For love such courage brings.”

And then the lady turned her round,
 A smile was on her face—
 “ I leave my love and bid him seek
 For me in that fair place.

“And I will stand beside the door
 Holding my arms out wide,
 And draw him by the strength of love
 Those golden gates inside.”

She smiled again, and went away,
 And there her red rose lies ;—
 For our dear lady entered in
 The peace of Paradise.

A Perverse Woman

“Now choose, my daughter,” said the Angel,
 “Among these suitors for your hand.
 They all shall pass as in a vision,
 And each shall freely understand
 That you are choosing once for all,
 Beyond recall.”

And as the first light in the morning
 Comes slowly creeping o’er the skies,
 So grew the mockery sweet of laughter,
 Yet half regretful, in her eyes :
 “I do not wish them to be all
 Beyond recall.”

“Nay, daughter, fool not with thy fortune ;
 Here cometh one hath loved thee long.”
 “Oh, yes,” she answered, “from the morning
 Ev’n to the ring of even-song—
 Scarce round the circle of the day !
 Bid him away !

“ Though I am just, and know him able
To while away a tedious hour,
And I might love him long as lingers
The little life-time of a flower,
He is too light—I bid him go :
Far better so.

“And you, with conquering air, who deem me
A woman fitted to adorn
Your home with all the woman-virtues,
Mother of children yet unborn,—
No, no,” she said, “I pray you seek
A soul more meek.

“ And you ! I lull and soothe your sorrows,
I pity, listen, sympathise ?—
And well we know that consolation
Endears the sufferer in our eyes.
But I should weary of the task—
Too much to ask.

"I'm slight and slender as that brooklet
That dances by in careless glee ;
Yet deep and restless and uncertain
As the eternal changing sea.
Still, there is one—nay, if he came
 'Twould be the same."

Then, as her guardian looked and wondered
To see the red rise in her cheek,
Who cometh?—"I have loved in silence,
Being of those who do not speak."
"I know you hard, and silent oft,"
She answered soft.

“ You are of those—— ” “ Nay, dearest, listen :

I claim you mine by many a right ;
And I have served you long in silence,
Through storm and sunshine your true knight.
Give me yourself, your love, your fate ! ”

“ Will you not wait ? ”

“ Not for a moment. I have waited,
Now you must speak without recall.”

“ I do not think your wooing tender,
Nor am I sure I love at all.”

He threw his strong arms round her—kissed—
Did she resist ?

“ My daughter,” said the Guardian Angel,

“ I know you safe at last, at rest.
Now Heaven be thanked that you have chosen
The noblest, strongest, truest, best.”

“ I did not choose,” she said, “ at all ;
He did it all.”

“ And why that little discontented
Soft shadow lying in your eyes ? ”

“ Only that I am half regretting
I was not cold enough, nor wise ;
For when he kissed me, I did this—
Gave back his kiss.”

“ Doubtless,” the Angel answered smiling,

“ You will make up in many a way
For that concession of a moment ;
But try him not too much, I pray.”

And rising up from her dejection,
 Laughing, she shook her golden head.
 "Difference and reconciliation
 Is what a woman loves," she said ;
 "Thwarting and baffling now and then
 Is good for men."

The White Star

Even as a fair star shining in the heaven
 Hidden by clouds doth still the same remain ;
 Even as a lily in her leaves enfolden
 Fears not the anger of the driving rain
 But waits in patience for the sun again :
 So shin'st thou still upon us, my white star !
 For even though the clouds are dark awhile,
 And consolation seemeth very far,
 Thou know'st that still abides th' eternal smile,
 And the dear tears of Him who wept that we
 Must pray, like Him, in our Gethsemane.

Song

Oh, never say I do not know
 That pain is not for me alone ;
 My soul has answered to your own,
 Lit by the self-same glow.

'Twas your relentless hand that set
 The bar between your life and mine.
 How dare I dream that you repine,
 Or even love me yet ?

If by a look, or word, or sign
 I knew your soul still touched my soul,
 Though seas and storms betwixt us roll,
 Your sorrows would be mine.

Love's Tyranny

"We have loved through a long sweet summer,
 And loved and lover were true ;
 Now life has set to autumn
 And I belong to you.

"But take as my gift, beloved,
 The knowledge that now noways
 Do I hold you as mine, now summer
 Has set to autumn days."

"Nay, sweet, I am ever your captive,
 You are free for fancies new ;
 And autumn may set to winter,
 But I belong to you."

"For ever and a day"

I wonder if she often thinks
 Of him with whom she walked that May,
 When first it seemed to her that love
 Could last for ever and a day.

I wonder if he often thinks
 Of her whose soft hand gently lay
 On his one moment, when she vowed
 To love for ever and a day.

I wonder if they sometimes sigh,
 And let their fancies backward stray
 With tender longing that their love
 Had lasted ever and a day.

I wonder if to one or both
 A sweeter thing has come their way
 Than that dear love which once they thought
 Would last for ever and a day.

A Question

Would I take all your pain,
 And bear my own beside
 To give you back again
 A joy that died ?

Would I take back the love
 You pitying gave to me,
 And by my sacrifice
 Proclaim you free ?

To make your hard ways smooth
 Let mine be ever rough ?
 I do not think that I
 Am strong enough !

Dearest

Dearest, if both of us should wait
 Together outside Heaven's gate,
 Would either of us pass therein,
 Accepted, purified from sin,
 And walk, content and glorified,
 Knowing the other still outside ?
 Ah, no ! Ah, no !

Dearest, if in some other star
 My soul must wait awhile, afar,
 Knowing that for a little space
 We may not see the other's face,
 On earth while your soul lingers yet
 Shall you forget, or I forget ?
 Ah, no ! Ah, no !

Dearest, if in eternity
 Your soul from mine divided be,
 And I must know, you knowing nought,
 Your soul another soul has sought,
 Shall I have strength enough to let
 No memory of me haunt you yet ?
 Ah, no ! Ah, no !

Good-bye, Dear Heart

I loved a better self in you,
 And you a sweeter self in me ;
 Alas, alas ! can this be true,
 That we must ever parted be ?
 Good-bye, dear heart !
 Can this be true ?

We were as children who believe
 A summer day can never end,
 Or roses die, or hearts deceive,
 Or true friend ever part from friend.
 Good-bye, dear heart !
 Did you deceive ?

When did the little serpent creep,
 And whisper low his perfidies ?
 Was it when I was fast asleep
 And slumber pressing down my eyes ?
 Good-bye, dear heart !
 Let memory sleep.

But you were waking, dear, the while,
 List'ning the serpent say his say,
 And watching with a cynic's smile
 A woman's faith all swept away.
 Good-bye, dear heart,
 Who loved awhile !

Now, when I wake, does it not seem
 You sleep ? Well, sleep, and take your rest.
 No serpent-poisoning in your dream,
 But by all peaceful thoughts caressed.
 Good-bye, dear heart !
 Dream out your dream.

So thus good-bye, my once sweetheart,
 And now my best belovèd foe.
 We who believed not death could part,
 Who loved, ah, not so long ago—
 Good-bye, sweet heart—
 Why *should* we part ?

Death's Security

I

I would that you could die, not live,
 Just as you are, as roses die
 The moment their maturity
 Proves the perfection they can give,
 Then drop from off the slender stem,
 For there is no more need of them.

Look once more how my image lies
 Mirrored in those enchanting eyes ;
 And leave me for a moment yet,
 Your hand like a white violet
 Close in my hand. And then to kiss
 Your lips—so—that I should not miss
 Your faint soft murmur of good-bye,
 Breathed through your last kiss as you die—
 Knowing that both for me, for you,
 Death has done more than life could do.

II

Good-bye, dear eyes ! A little while
 You lit the darkness of my days ;
 But life has passed and nothing stays :
 Good-bye, dear eyes, and tender smile,
 And loving ways.

Good-bye, dear hands ! And now I press
 For the last time, their whiteness slim,
 And though my eyes with tears are dim,
 I know you would not love them less
 For tears in them.

Good-bye, dear lips, where death has set
His kiss—a colder one than mine !
But your sweet soul will not resign
Love's memory, nor quite forget
This kiss of mine.

Apparitions

Sitting alone in the firelight,
 Dreaming over the past,
 I suddenly look up and see you.
 Home again safely at last.

And you, in a far-distant country,
Waking up in the sunrise may see
The woman you love best before you ;
Oh say, can that woman be me ?

But the visions have faded, and lonely
I sit by my fast dying flame ;
And you, in your tropical sunrise,
Perhaps have just murmured my name.

At Evening Time

Dear, in the morning we used to wander
Ever together, hand in hand,
Recklessly, lovingly ; feared not to squander
Laughter and love in our fairyland.

But in the noontide Love lay sleeping :

There was less need of his presence then.

Why should he trail his fair wings, weeping,

In the world's wide market of women and men ?

What were Love's dreams ? Did he wake and weep,

Or wander with us in the land of sleep ?

Dear, it is evening, and work is over,

We are so tired, and rest is sweet.

Hand in hand go we, lover and lover ;

Love has not tarried long to discover

Where we are waiting his fairy feet.

It is Love—our Love, though his step is slower,

And his wings are folded in perfect rest,

His brows uncrowned by the myrtle flower ;

But just as he is we love him best.

Now he has folded his wings for ever ;

Here at our side he has promised to stay ;

When we are borne to our grave together

He will go with us all the way ;

Love at our headstone will sit and weep

When we are laid to our last long sleep.

A Reproof

I think your spirit doubts my loyalty

Too much for your content, dear love, and mine.

Of you I ask too little ; but of me

You ask too much of human and divine,

Either or both. I would not have it known

How much I feel for you ; else must we part

And say a sad good-bye. Let well alone.

Believe I love you, dearest, in my heart
 Beyond all other women. Do not seek
 To scan the depths and heights ; but once for all
 Trust that the more I love, the less I speak ;
 And whatsoever in our lives befall,
 Because of silence (finding words are weak)
 Judge me not irresponsive to your call,
 Remembering that such love too deeply lies
 To need demands, and gives by deeds, replies.

Amaranth

A white thread here and there
 In the goldness of your hair—
 What matters it to me,
 Who still can only see
 What the glitter used to be ?

You say a wrinkle lies
 Beneath your lovely eyes—
 What matters it to me,
 Who still can only see
 Sweetness enduringly ?

You sigh because each day
 Leads you more far away
 From youth. What's that to me,
 Who still can only see
 What you must always be ?

“Cruel as the grave”

If I were lying all alone,
 Upon my face a burial-stone,
 A mighty granite cross outspread
 To mark the last home of the dead,
 And you were passing, would my dust
 Stir, as the living woman must ?

If I had slept for many a year,
 And you with quiet step drew near,
 And whispered to the grave my name,
 And how you loved me still the same
 As when the light shone in my eyes—
 Presentiment of Paradise—
 Would all the wasted being thrill,
 Responsive once more to your will ?

Ah, if you came, Love, all alone,
 To weep beside my burial-stone,
 I should not hear ; did you but weep,
 Your tears would only soothe my sleep.
 But should you pass, and with you one
 Who loved, as I long since had done,
 And you in lowest voice should say,
 “I loved *her* once, as *you* to-day,”
 An angry ghost would wake and rise
 To mock you with my haunting eyes.

Understood

Dearest, thou saidst no word to me,
 And yet I knew the best,
 Half understood, all unexplained,
 And unconfessed !

Dearest, thou saidst no word to me,
 And yet I knew the worst,
 Well understood, though unexplained,
 As at the first !

There scarce had needed look, still less
 Premeditated word,
 When thy soul uttered all its love,
 And my soul heard.

And now with no betraying tones,
 Nor severing word nor sign,
 Thy soul from mine has passed away,
 And mine from thine !

Among the Stars

My love, you live among the stars ;
 Sometimes, at day's decline,
 I look between the shining bars
 Which guard your soul from mine,
 And yet you never greeting send
 To one who was on earth your friend.

Will you not take me through that gate
 Which leads up to your home ?
 What if I stand awhile and wait
 To watch how you will come,
 And, with the smile I loved, will say,
 " You need not wait outside to-day ? "

Not yet, I think ; I see your face,
 Sweet, full of love and prayer ;
 But I must walk in heavenly ways,
 Before I meet you there,
 Content with glimpses through the bars
 Of your fair home among the stars.

O Love, in those mysterious spheres
 Where you and angels dwell,
 Do voices from this planet pierce
 With sobs and funeral knell ?
 Or is it only fancy deems
 You hear and love us in our dreams ?

Ah, no ! we two have surely met,
 And afterwards shall tread,
 Through woodlands sweet with violet,
 Through gardens of the dead,
 No longer dead, but, death defied,
 United in love glorified.

Hereafter

In this dimly sweet wild woodland
 There's a strange light gleaming through
 Shady leaves, which is not sunshine,
 Not the radiance that we knew,
 Not the sunlight of the earth
 Of the home which gave us birth.

There is softness in this radiance,
 And nor glare nor brilliant ray ;
 'Tis like morn and noontide dreaming,
 Dreaming happy hours away,
 Without pause or recognition
 Of perceptible transition.

For a tranquil peace is brooding
 Over every leaf and flower ;
 And the aching soul is sated
 With the stillness of the hour ;
 Nothing more to seek, discover,
 For the thirst of earth is over.

If I backward throw my dreaming
 To that distant planet Earth,
 Where I suffered, loved, and hardened
 Into simulated mirth,
 Lo, the soft wind whispers chiding,
 " Here your peace is firm, abiding ! "

As I wander through my woodland,
 With the earth-pain hushed away,
 And my spirit soothed and softened
 By the warm breath of the day,
 Like a new-forgiven child
 I am calmed, self-reconciled.

Half remembering the suffering,
 But rejoicing at the rest,
 I will ask not " Is it Heaven ? "
 For I know that it is best ;
 And my slow steps wend at will
 Through the woodlands sweet and still.

As I turn to where the shadows
 Thickest lie upon the grass,
 I see one who comes to meet me :
 Can I bear to let him pass ?
 And the old doubt seems to rise
 Even here in Paradise.

No, his hands clasp mine more closely
 In this garden of the soul,
 And his eyes would read my secret,
 And his will my will control :
 Thus have I but found again
 The living ghost of my dead pain.

Expiation

I

EXPIATING

When first I died they did not say to me,
 " You must be tortured, or feel desperate pain."
 But, " Live the anguish of your life again,
 Its ever unfulfilled expectancy."

And thus I expiate those wasted hours
 When, longing for one presence, I, each day,
 Worked round the idle circle of my way,
 Fading like drifting snows and last year's flowers.

And still I linger by one little gate ;
 Beyond me stretch long plains of Paradise
 To which I never turn my languid eyes,
 Nor heed the angels passing as I wait.
 Over my head the unfamiliar skies,
 Nor less nor more for that disconsolate.

II

EXPIATED

Now have I passed through penance for long years,
 Wherein I waited and bemoaned my fate,
 Until I learned that I must expiate
 By strained dry eyelids earth's consoling tears,
 By disappointment ever still renewed
 Each lawless throbbing moment when I dared
 Defy my soul's upbraidings,—laughed, nor cared
 If angels shrank from such beatitude.

Unconsciously my spirit frees her wings
 From lingering remnants of material guise,
 Learning to look, with unimpassioned eyes,
 From where the fragrance of earth's memory clings
 To where, beyond unpictured destinies,
 The first created son of morning sings.

In the Vague Unknown

If I could only know for certain
 That you were *there*, as I am *here*,
 If any hand could lift the curtain,
 Let in the spirit-atmosphere,
 And all the mystery be clear !

Still in the clouds our thoughts must wander,
 Still clouds, still dreaming fantasies,
 Tortured with doubts—not here, but yonder
 The reading of the mysteries,
 The mind that knows, the eye that sees.

And thus the years pass on. No clearer—
 The spirit-world—than in the days
 When God sent Christ, and Heaven seemed nearer,
 And mortals walked in angels' ways,
 Nor counted cost, but gave God praise.

And I—I stretch my hands out blindly.
 Beyond the veil if spirits wait
 Those who on Earth were wise and kindly,
 Does merely passing through the gate
 Obliterate, annihilate ?

And still the passionate cry unheeded
 Dies out in echoes on the air.
 Has ever mortal yet succeeded
 In catching answer anywhere
 From vague celestial atmosphere ?

A Mute Caress

They said no word, made no confession,
 Only his eyes sought hers—
 For love itself forbids expression
 When Duty's voice demurs.

And all the while her soft hand lingers
 In that fond clasp of his,
 The touches of her quivering fingers
 Seem to him each a kiss.

A small soft kiss, that lightly flutters
 And dares not more express—
 But all her soul its passion utters
 In that one mute caress.

Sleeping Felicity

I, who had waked a weary while,
 Stole up to watch my slumberers,
 Each with that little mouth of hers
 Rose-red and ripe for kiss and smile.

One with her arm beneath her head,
 Gold curls into the pillow crushed,
 Her little rounded cheeks all flushed—
 My baby angel in her bed.

And one, whose lovely eyes, awake,
 Are like the light on summer seas.
 She was most beautiful of these ;
 I stooped to kiss her for love's sake.

And a small arm crept round to cling
 About my neck ; her eyelids stirred,
 And yet she never spoke a word.
 'Twas then I heard the first bird sing.

While through the curtain, half undrawn,
 Beyond the square of window-pane,
 Beginning of a day again,
 The early, earliest flush of dawn.

“The soul attains”

(From the picture by Burne-Jones)

Could you for once be only human,
 My queen, my dream of Heaven afar,
 Just for awhile an earthly woman,
 And not a star !

Or are they but a man's fond fancies,
That love those perfect lips might redden,
That love might warm ethereal glances,
Unchecked, unhidden ?

Nay, but I would not touch your whiteness ;
And deem not that 'tis passion dead
Which bids me leave unsullied brightness
Unkissed—unwed.

For earthly love may wane and falter,
But God prevails, where man refrains.
I lay my gift on Passion's altar :
 " The soul attains."

On a Picture of Venus rising
from the Waters,

By Botticelli, in Florence

That lady, loved of Botticelli,
 Who trod pink petals, eyes blue, wide—
 Was she his image of the spring-time,
 His lady-love of Whitsuntide ?

Eyes blue and calm, without expression,
The water under white feet trod,
While spring winds sprinkled rosy petals—
Was she of mortals, or of God ?

Like men's hearts lie the rosy petals ;
 Did she hold hearts as some a creed ?
 Were men to drown beneath those waters
 She would not know, or knowing, heed.

White Deer in the Borghese Gardens

Through the long stillness of an afternoon
Beneath soft Roman skies,
Like shadows passing in a mystic swoon
That ever fall and rise,

Pace the white creatures, living, sentient things,
But ghost-like as they roam ;
Mysterious as the memory that clings
Round a deserted home.

Are they yet living ? or but ghosts of deer
Who once were used to stray
Past windows lit with royal pomp and cheer
Of a forgotten day ?

Turned to the Wall

“ What is that picture turned to the wall ? ”

“ Dare not to turn it ; we cannot tell.”

“ The face that is pictured—smiles it in Heaven,
Or is it tortured in Hell ? ”

“ Dare not to turn it ! ”

“ Was it a woman loved and abandoned ?

Did her hate and her shame turn to man, or to God ?

Was she so fair that when one loved her

He drank of hyssop and felt the rod ? ”

“ Dare not to turn it ! ”

“ Is it not strange that the spiders know it,
 And the soft brown moth in her stealthy flight,
 And the tapestried walls have learnt to love it—
 The picture that lives in eternal night ? ”
 “ Dare not to turn it ! ”

“ So will it be throughout the ages,
 Till a bold hand grasp it and turn the face.
 Will he shrink affrighted from nameless horror,
 Or know he has looked on an Angel's face ? ”
 “ Dare not to turn it ! ”

“ Dare your hand be the one to turn it,
 Face to face with the light of the sun ?
 Whatever of evil she wrought, 'tis over ;
 All things pass, and are over and done.
 You have turned the picture ! Ah God, those eyes
 Were a good man's curse, or a bad man's prize.”

Pictures in the Crystal

I

A great rock standing in a weary land ;
 On either side they wait, hand stretched to hand ;
 They touch not, meet not, ever held apart,
 They cannot hear the beating of each heart.

The night is falling round them desolate—
 How can they struggle or avert their fate ?
 “ Wilt thou not save me, O thou dear Unseen ? ”—
 He cannot reach her with that rock between.

II

There is a hill on which the sunlight sleeps,
 And two are climbing up its grassy steeps ;
 Beneath them lies a bitter land of night,
 But they two walk together in the light.

“Hast thou forgotten all the darkness, sweet ?”
 Her sunlit eyes his happy words repeat :
 For when the soul has found the rest it seeks
 It knows all words are vain, and silence speaks.

III

Two, 'neath the shadow of the sweeping trees
 In a fair garden, at each other smile
 Joyous at sight of every baby wile
 Of a young child set on his father's knees—
 So let them rest, after long years of pain.
 Will not the picture linger for a space ?
 The cloud is falling white upon each face
 And only sorrowfully lifts again !

IV

A woman lying on a lily bed,
 And one who watches by her : “O love, dead,
 Who loved me all these days, come back to me,
 If but to say thou knows't I think of thee !”

And as his tears fall quickly on her face
 He sees not that her spirit, standing by,
 Bends down to clasp him in a close embrace
 Before she melts into eternity.

The Choice

“ Angel of Mercy, O benignant Angel,
 You bear two gifts for me in outstretched hand—
 Two gifts for choice. To some the two are given,
 But I must choose between—I understand.

“ Dear Angel, give me both, for I am woman ;
 How can I crush my woman-heart away ?
 And yet that gift of fame ! Ah, that were precious :
 But thou hast warned for both 'tis vain to pray

“ My life is passing—it were sweet at evening
 Of a vexed life to know that fame were mine ;
 That, after death, my children might revere me
 As one name more in the long poet line.

“ O Angel, thou art strong, and thou art patient ;
 Thou bidst me choose, as only choice is given,
 Not both ; but Love, or Glory and Ambition !—
 I should forget to flight my way to heaven.

“ Fame, that the world might say : ‘ She is a poet :
 She had the gift God gives a favoured soul.’
 But in that distant country should I know it—
 That thoughts of mine could comfort and control ?

“ Yes, it were glorious. Give me fame, great Angel,
 And I will shut my heart up from the past.
 I have had love, and I will choose ambition
 And fame, to give me comfort at the last.

- “But there is one—perchance he scarcely loves me—
 Yet he would miss my woman tenderness.
 With fame may I still see him ? Night and morning
 Ask God his ways to comfort and to bless ?
- “No ? Then I choose, O foolish, foolish woman,
 To fling away all hope and power of fame,
 Just for the fear that he might miss my loving,
 Just to pray God to keep him all the same.”
- “So Love thou choosest—frail, uncertain passion—
 Losing for ever all that fame can give ? ”
- “Yes, I will risk it. 'Tis alone by loving
 Such foolish human souls as mine can live.”

Waiting

Love, who had said no word for many days,
 Spoke out with passion fervent words of praise ;
 And I, reluctant, turned my head away,
 And would not heed, nor let Love have his say.
 (Now I am waiting for I know not what.)

Love has now turned from me, and I am left
 Of hope, and tenderness, and joy bereft :
 And all because I clung to what must seem
 Only the memory of a long-spiced dream.
 (I must be silent, nor bemoan my lot.)

For my own deed has done it ; I abide
 Just within reach of joy, but just outside.
 While Friendship sits with calm accustomed eyes,
 Sweet Love has flown away to happier skies.
 (And I am waiting, for I know not what.)

A Song of Seven

I

If the joy had reached fruition,
 And the dream had gained completeness,
 Dream and joy had lost their sweetness
 In attainment of fruition.

II

I think our chiefest joy in Heaven will be
 The thought, it can have no satiety ;
 I think all earthly happiness will seem
 But shadows of a disconnected dream.

III

As little children greedily will keep
 The best for last—the sugar and the fruit,—
 So we, belovèd friend, nor mourn nor weep
 That our communion hath no earthly root ;
 But rather joy to think in Eden's bowers
 It springeth ever beautiful and new ;
 And, gladly suffering the lagging hours,
 We know we shall look back on them as few ;
 Nor shall we grudge a single heart-ache sore,
 For we thereby shall prize our rapture more.

IV

Let me whisper, my belovèd,
 Closely in thine ear ;
 Only thou shalt understand,
 No one else shall hear.

You remember, my belovèd,
 I, one summer day,
 Stole your very heart from out you,
 Half in earnest, half in play.

So I whisper you my secret,
 Feel nor loss nor pain :
 You have mine instead, belovèd,
 Not your own again.

V

Love in the morning is a lonely thing,
 An immature and fragile blossoming,
 Dying, like those beloved of gods, too soon
 To face the splendours of the afternoon.

Love in the afternoon, when shadows lengthen,
 When youth has passed, and deeper feelings strengthen !
 Then two, world-wearied, find from toil release,
 And in each other Love's divinest peace !

VI

I do not ask you to forget me,
 Nor do I say, " Do not forget " ;
 For time alone sets limitation
 On passion, sorrow, and regret.

But only say when I am lying
 Hid from that sight I loved erstwhile,
 " She never vexed me by her sighing,
 Nor jarred on sorrow with her smile.

“ In life’s inevitable After
 All other women come and go ;
 One woman, with her tender laughter,
 Has passed away like last year’s snow.

“ Yet now and then some dream of sweetness
 Brings back the memory of her kiss,
 The welcome in her voice ”—’tis little
 To ask of constancy but this.

VII

It never hurt a man or woman yet
 To love and to be loved. Though God has set
 His mark on those who wander far and wide,
 There is no mark on those who have not lied
 To Him, or their own souls—but as a debt
 Have laid their love in sorrow at His feet,
 Asking to find it once more purified
 In His high Heaven, if He shall deem it meet.

L'ENVOI

These are the last love-songs that I shall write,
 These are the last love-words that I shall say ;
 My pen has but one ink ; my heart is tired,
 And only rest has come to be desired :
 And so good-bye ! Put pen and love away ;
 Heart, hand, are weary ; cometh soon the night :
 God grant a morning in a sweeter day !

PART III

Last Poems

(1895—1906)

The Neophyte

Hundreds of years ago I prayed
 To Egypt's Gods, a Priestess Maid.
 Hundreds of years ago he came,
 A Neophyte, to feed the flame
 Which burnt always before the shrine ;
 And I—why, I was half divine.

He was of Earth and I of Heaven,
 For all my links to Earth were riven ;
 He might not dare to lift his eyes
 To me, save in my Priestess' guise ;
 And yet beneath my girdle beat
 The heart of womanhood complete.

O womanhood ! O woman heart !
 And if I failed to play the part
 Of one of God's own Priestesses,
 Did not my every thought confess
 That one beloved Neophyte
 Reigned in my dreaming, day and night ?

My Neophyte ! who spoke the first,
 And who let in the light that burst
 Beyond restraint, beyond control,
 Upon each passion-ridden soul :
 My Neophyte, my Neophyte !
 And this was sin in the high Gods' sight !

We met—we met ! The night winds stirred
 And carried far each whispered word ;
 And then we kissed, and when we kissed
 We knew the rapture long time missed ;
 And so no more we knelt and prayed
 As Neophyte and Priestess Maid.

.

Hundreds of years ago, and now
 I expiate my shattered vow—
 Hundreds of years ago, and still
 The penance works. Come good or ill,
 We met, that sweet Egyptian night,
 My Love, my King, my Neophyte !

Between Incarnations

A thousand years have come and gone,
 A thousand more must pass
 Before we two may meet again,
 Whose bodies in the grass
 Lie side by side in wedded graves
 As only dust—alas !

We two—and only one of us
 Remembers those glad days,
 When we together held high court
 And heard the people's praise—
 We two together, King and Queen,
 In gorgeous golden ways.

I was the Queen, and loved to let
 Your greatness rule my own,
 To raise you to my high estate
 Upon an equal throne,
 And place on your belovèd brow
 My fair Imperial crown.

And you—you loved to take it all
 Through your great love to me,
 And if I chose to crown you King
 Yours was the fealty,
 Sworn first as subject, then as Love,
 And then as Lord to me.

And now from a far-distant sphere
 I see you calm and great,
 Without a memory of that love
 Whose loss makes desolate
 Through many weary years the Queen—
 A soul now schooled to wait.

You cannot hear me ! Oh, my curse,
 To see on your still face
 No humanising touch of earth—
 Of passion not a trace—
 Nor know if a new life will bring
 The thrill of your embrace.

Reincarnations

There is scarce need that I should speak,
 Or tell my thoughts to thee,
 For now I know that we have met,
 And—soul-linked thou to me
 Throughout all lives—thy soul has been
 My soul's affinity.

What taught me this ? Ah ! wherefore ask ?
 What tells the bird to sing ?
 What teaches golden buds to break
 Into bright blossoming,
 Or the dark world to waken up
 Each year to love and spring ?

For these things know within themselves—
 Of budding, bloom, and song,
 Intuitively all things know,
 And instinct leads not wrong—
 And our two souls have met and loved
 In many a lifetime long.

I know it by the sense that thrills,
 That thou must understand
 The words I mean before I speak,
 By touch of hand to hand,
 That oft before we two have met
 In many a strange, sweet land.

Elusive intuitions ! Still
 Thy soul to mine has said
 Such words as linger through the lapse
 'Twixt many a lifetime sped.
 In some life sweeter yet to come
 Love shall be perfected !

Written at Sea

(March, 1895)

All in the silence of the night
 I hear your voice, I see your face,
 Your spirit doth with mine embrace ;
 I lose you in the morning light.

How dear you are, how doubly dear,
 Now we are parted by wide seas !
 How deep the ecstasy of these
 Who, far, yet know each other near.

Sometimes I seem to hear you speak :
 "Take courage, Love, the day will come
 When you shall have a welcome home."
 Then comes the light, and I awake.

And yet I was not all asleep—
 I think you too had waked and thought
 Of me, and the two fancies caught
 Each other midway on the deep.

Written at Sea—A Wish

(March 3, 1895)

I wish that you and I could be
 Alone beside a summer sea ;
 We two alone—no one beside,
 Hearing the whispers of the tide
 Breaking upon the golden sand—
 We two in a sweet summer land.
 (Ah, Love ! Ah, Love ! if this could be,
 We two beside a summer sea !)

Ah, Love ! could a dear fairy stand
 Beside me with her magic wand,
 And bid me choose one happy boon,
 I think a golden afternoon
 In sunshine by a summer sea,
 And you, my Love, alone with me,
 Is all the blessing I should pray ;
 Just you and I alone one day—
 Not for one day, but many days.
 In the dim Future's mystic haze
 I seem to see as in a glass
 Where fairy visions come and pass
 A glancing, silvered, summer sea,
 And you, my Love, alone with me.
 (Ah, Love ! Ah, Love ! if this could be,
 We two beside a summer sea !)

Sunset Thoughts

One pale star in the yellow waste
 Of an oriental sky ;
 As yet untouched by the moonbeam's kiss,
 The lotus lilies lie.

Above me the wild flight of birds,
 Each shrieking as he soars ;
 And my soul on her silver wings
 Hies to my own far shores.

Seeking in sleep, in my dreams to find,
 And waking, how sweet 'twould be
 To know that my love in the other land
 Is always loving me.

A Memory of Christmas at Barrackpore.

Oh, it saddens my very soul to know
 That I never shall see again
 The lake where the scarlet lilies glow,
 And the red above, and the red below,
 Of an Indian day on the wane.

And never shall see the turquoise flowers
 Which greeted my wondering eyes,
 And the roses red of those sunny bowers—
 When I knew that at home there were frost-
 bound hours
 While I was in Paradise.

A Fairy Song

I should like to steal away
 And live among the elves,
 And listen how the flowers
 Whisper to themselves ;

Hear how the harebell
 Rings his little bell
 For a fairy wedding
 Or a fairy knell ;

To see how the fairies
 Peep, and creep, and weep
 When one of their company
 Is laid down to sleep ;

To live among the fairies
 So long, and so long
 That seven years seem only
 A moon and evensong ;

To live with fairy people
 And learn of fairy things,
 And dance with them by moonlight
 In their emerald rings.

Nenuphars

Ah, how I long, ah, how I long
 Those fairy lands to see
 Without a friend, or any one,
 My only Love, but thee !

We would not wait to unlock the gate,
 But quickly scramble over,
 Just we alone, just one and one,
 The loved one and the lover.

We would not heed if any called,
 Nor then, nor now, nor after,
 For we would smother every sound
 With our own happy laughter.

And if the fancy came to us
 To live in fairy dwelling,
 We know the elves would harbour us
 Without need of compelling ;

And we would lie in rosy bed
 Culled by the fairy fingers,
 And over us the coverlet
 Whereof the fragrance lingers ;

And we would flit about the stars,
 And glide through close-locked portal,
 And wade among the nenuphars
 Of many a lake immortal.

The Canaries

(Nursery Rhyme)

"O Mamma," said little Mary,
 "May I have a cock canary ?"

"Yes, my love, if you are good,
 Do not dawdle at your food,
 Eat your dinner nice and quick,
 You shall have a little Dick."

“ O Mamma,” said little Mary,
 “ May I have a hen canary ? ”

“ Yes, my love, if you are sweet,
 And your lessons well repeat,
 Wash your little hands and feet.”

“ O Mamma,” said little Mary,
 “ May I have a chick canary ? ”
 May the hen lay little eggs ?
 May the chicks have little legs ?
 May the chicks have little eyes
 Peeping upwards to the skies ? ”

“ O my love,” said mother then,
 “ You must ask the cock and hen.”

On a Necklace in a Red Case

Say, on what neck hast thou lain ?
 Wast thou a love-gift to one
 Dearer and fairer than all
 Under the sun ?

Wast thou a token of love—
 Of love and of perfect faith—
 Love that endures beyond
 Sorrow and death ?

Where is the hand that clasped
 Round her delicate neck thy chain ?
 And of all their loving does nought
 But thou remain ?

Glittering diamond thing,
 How and where did they part ?
 To-day I open the case,
 Shaped like a heart—

A crimson heart of love,
 Old and faded and worn ;
 But thou, still shining on,
 Laugh'st death to scorn.

Foresight

At times, not oft, the spirit dances
 Akin to flower and bird and tree,
 Catching sweet fairy gleams and glances
 Like sunlight flashing on the sea ;

Sometimes forgetting all the sorrows,
 The wasted passion of the years,
 The certainty of painful morrows,
 The bitterness of unshed tears.

Sometimes, not often, through the hours
 So fraught with unrelieved regret,
 We pause to dream of joys not ours—
 To dream they may be our joys yet.

O eyes of mine, oft called clairvoyant,
 Look through the tears which blind you now,
 Foresee the heart, so sore now, buoyant,
 Foretell the sunlight on my brow.

Ah no, a dream ! ah no, a vision !
 True foresight tells the heart must break—
 O God ! why give me this prevision ?
 Just let me sleep, nor sleeping, wake.

Let Sorrow Sleep

Deep lie the records of the bygone years,
 Deep in my heart—alas ! my heart, not thine—
 Records of many shed and unshed tears,
 And records of unspoken doubts and fears,
 Sadder because unspoken. Heart of mine,
 A grave for sorrow ! Oh, let sorrow sleep,
 Nor wake again to weep, and weep, and weep.

Hush ! wake not slumbering memories of days
 Laid by with dead rose-leaves and lilac flowers.
 They have been ; 'tis enough. Through blinding
 haze

Of tears I dream upon the love once ours,
 Once living, and now dead. Oh, let me sleep,
 Nor wake again to weep, and weep, and weep.

Who said, Love has no end ? The end has come.
 Who said, Faith is eternal ? Faith has fled.
 I, who could speak, behold ! my lips are dumb,
 And what would words avail now hope is dead ?
 And nothing now can rouse Love from its sleep,
 Nor bid it wake again to weep, and weep.

“The Sorrow's Crown of Sorrows”

Only to feel the touch of your hand on my head
 again !

Oh ! the remembered joy, is it not pain on pain ?

Only to see your eyes smile as in bygone years !

I can scarcely recall their look because of my blinding
 tears !

Only to hear your voice whisper, "Be true! be strong!"

Have I not striven, Beloved? Yet the days are very long.

Only to feel again the touch on my lips of your kiss—
Oh! can Eternity's anguish equal the anguish of this?

Songs Unsung

Oh, who shall sing my songs unsung,
Taking my words from me?
And who shall learn their meaning, wrung
From my heart's agony?

And who shall win the love I lose,
The love I put away?
And whom shall my lost lover choose
To lie where once I lay?

And whom will his dear arms enfold,
Those arms that I resign;
And whose will be the babe to hold,
The babe that should be mine.

And on whose lips will fall the kiss
Of lover's ecstasy?
And whose will be the name by his
When in one grave they lie?

Lost Days

Oh, for the days lost, spent !
 Oh, for the sweet hours rent
 Out of remorseless time !
 Those few hours well worth living,
 That one love well worth giving—
 Love which disdained a crime.

Think, was it well we dropped
 The sweet thread ; that we stopped
 To save our souls, and cropped
 The blossom near the root ?
 Was it you, or I, who said
 “ What matter if hearts bled ? ”
 What hope of life to dead
 Frail blossom and crushed fruit ?

While it is yet Day

Oh, still remember me when I am gone
 From thy dear sight to where the dead men dwell ;
 Think how I may be making bitter moan ;
 Remember always that I loved thee well.

Think of me wandering in that unknown land
 In strange new company, or else alone,
 And in the vague light holding out my hand
 For thee to clasp and fold it in thine own :

And then to realise no touch of thine
 Can reach me, and no whisper ever fall
 Upon my ears :—What bitterness were mine
 To know, however poor, that Life were all !

Oh, love me, dearest, in these living days.

Love me while eyes can smile to living eyes ;
Love me, not just in thought, but tender ways
While still my being to your own replies.

Wait not till I am dead to say—" Ah, true !
I loved her better than she ever knew."

A Spinning Song

How happy was I in those days
I walked in little baby ways ;
Carrying the rosy weight upstairs,
Teaching him morn and even prayers,
Kissing his little curly head,
Wrapping him warm and soft in bed !

What care had I if kingdoms fell,
So that my little babe was well ?
This party in—that party out—
And things the wise world talks about,
Politics, battles, other lands—
I held my little monarch's hands !

O happiest years ! I've learned since then
The ways of women and of men.
Not all unloved I've gone my way,
Ruled o'er some hearts with tender sway ;
And some have bowed before my feet ;
I've cherished fame, and found love sweet,
But felt no joy as when I pressed
My first-born baby to my breast.

Now life speeds on. Reluctantly
 I let the tiring years go by.
 I sit and work my spinning-wheel,
 And, as the thread winds on the reel,
 My foot in fancy seems to keep
 Rocking a baby in its sleep.

The Three Paths

We wandered in the flowery way ;
 Joy did our spirits move.
 There was no need its name to say,
 Because we knew 'twas " Love."
 And then our footsteps lingering stayed,
 Not all dissevered yet,
 We dared not name that shadowy glade,
 Yet felt the name, " Regret."
 And now, ah me ! I walk alone,
 Nor heed if rough or fair
 The barren path I wander down,
 And know its name—" Despair."

Beyond

Ah, who can paint the joy
 When all is over with being,
 An end to this tangible, weary
 Sentient doing and seeing ;
 Soaring with wide-spread wing
 In wonderful tracts of space,
 Breathing immortal ether,
 Seeing souls face to face ?

An end to the petty anguish
 That warps this life at its root,
 An end to the aimless reaping
 Of barren blossom and fruit ;
 An end to the thankless scheming
 To fit this life to a plan,
 An end to the malice of woman,
 An end to unfaith of man.

Good-bye to the longing for life,
 Good-bye to its long endeavour ;
 Good-bye to the wrecked ambitions,
 To doubt and despair for ever.
 With the dawn after death comes life .
 Ah, Dear, I must part from you ;
 I shall meet you again—elsewhere—
 Beyond—and begin it anew.

To Victor

(Born in India, Feb. 13, 1897)

Child of the golden oriental skies,
 Child of the glories of an Indian day,
 What Spirit looks from out thy wistful eyes,
 Far, far away ?

Sweet, wistful eyes that seem to seek afar
 For sight of autumn woods and uplands grey,
 Seeking thy home beneath its northern star,
 Far, far away.

Dear Baby ! nestling to thy mother close,
 As one who would in tender language say—
 “ I come to keep her arms full, warm for those
 Far, far away.”

With Violets

As in the years long past I sent
 These flowers of faith to you,
 So, now those brighter years are spent,
 In fancy I renew
 Their bygone hours, and send the flowers
 To prove that hearts are true
 And friends still dear. Though autumn hours
 Have left my garden bare,
 And robbed the roses from the bowers,
 The violets still are there.

The Unseen Lover

Sweet is the singing of an unseen bird,
 Its small throat quivering, hid in summer spray.
 Deem you that singing better, only heard,
 Or would you see the singer?—Lover, say!
 Surely when comes the evening of the day,
 In the enfolding dusk more mystery clings
 About the fluttering of the unseen wings,
 The singer by the darkness hid away.
 So I who in the daylight dare not speak,
 Lest vision should the subtle charm destroy,
 And all the sweetness of my passion break,
 And by a presence seen disturb my joy,
 Or by some look or gesture love annoy,
 Send love to sleep all day, by night to wake.

To the Unseen Ideal

Belov'd companion of my earthly days,
 Closer to me than all with whom I talk,
 Whose hand upholds me when alone I walk,
 With whom I commune in remotest ways,
 From whose just blame I shrink, striving for praise ;
 Hearing your voice when evening is most still,
 Ordering my lips according to your will,
 Feeling your touch when sunshine softly plays
 About my hair—it seemeth then your kiss.
 But Psyche never less her lover saw
 Before she lit the lamp, than I your eyes ;
 In thee I dream what may be all my bliss,
 In thee I look for love without a flaw
 When my Ideal I greet in Paradise.

“Ships that pass in the night”

“Ships that pass in the night !”
 These have passed in the day,
 Made some voyage together
 Then went drifting away,
 Always missing each other—
 Will they meet in some rock-girt bay ?

Let it be calm after storm
 (This is the prayer they pray)—
 Calm as we reach our port,
 Hearing a welcome “Stay !
 Rest, O ye storm-tossed ships !
 Rest at the close of the day.”

Madonna Lilies

Athwart the gloom, athwart the gloom
 Lurking in corners grey and grim
 The whiteness of tall lilies' bloom
 Seems like a tender bridal hymn ;
 Or like pervading sunshine through
 The pensive darkness of the room ;

Or like a tall saint in her niche,
 Fair sculptured image of rapt prayer,
 Her hands outspread as if to shed
 A furtive blessing unaware,
 The light from some half-shaded lamp
 Falling on her uncovered hair ;

Or like an angel gliding in,
 Seen only by young children's eyes,
 While we who wait outside the gate
 Watch, wondering at their glad surprise—
 For only such pure souls can see
 His face Who dwells in Paradise.

December : 1899

When the Angel of Death stands by me
 And asks me, "What have you done
 In this life of labour and trial ?"
 I shall answer : "I gave my son."
 I gave my flesh to my country,
 I gave myself to the foe,
 For I gave the child born of me,
 And do we not reap as we sow ?

My blood has sprinkled God's country—
 God's country as much as this—
 For in His eyes every country
 And each mother's son is His.
 And the wail of each mother rises
 To the very foot of His throne,
 For to every mother, God knoweth,
 Hers is an only son.

A War Lullaby

When the light wanes over the sea
 The thought comes back to me
 How my boy went over the sea,
 And my heart was broken in me.
 The light flickers over the sea,
 And the light flickered fitfully
 Over the waves of the sea
 Bearing my boy from me.
 Far away over the sea
 The dear son fought for me—
 For he fought for his own country,
 Fought for his country and me ;
 Fought for his mother country
 In far lands over the sea.
 And the waves are talking to me
 And all mothers in misery
 Watching for news of the sea,
 Praying God's good mercy
 May bring the loved one safely
 To every mother and me.

In Time of War

In the disturbance and the strife
 When all nerves thrill and all things jar,
 In this upheaval of our life
 Our very spirits breathe, speak, "War !"
 Our senses quiver at the sound
 Of noisy voices in the street,
 At every rumour pulses bound
 And dread the words "Repulse"—"Defeat !"

I, whose heart sinks, whose spirits quake
 At thought of battle and of blood,
 I, sick at heart, yet bid you take
 Courage, and faithful hardihood ;
 Faith that shall comfort and reward
 Those brave men fighting ; prayers that bless,
 Confidence in our souls to guard
 Our well-belov'd and bring success.

Oh, let our spirits fight with theirs
 Who fight to-morrow and to-day,
 And let the armour of our prayers
 Shield them in pestilence and fray.
 Strong in the faith that, ours the cause,
 Our victory shall bid fighting cease ;
 Demanding, less a world's applause
 Than blessing from the God of Peace.

“In Remembrance”

Jesus, Son of Mary, Lord of Humanity !

Hear the cry of anguish sent up by the mothers !
 Thou hast borne the sin, and Mary bore the sorrow,
 We are all her daughters, our sons are Thy
 brothers !

Jesus, Son of Mary, Lord of Humanity !

Protect for us our children who fight while war
 doth last ;
 Till Thy peace Thou sendest the nations fight and
 struggle,
 Guard and keep our soldiers till war time be past.

Jesus, Son of Mary, Lord of Humanity !

When the soldiers enter Thy kingdom one by one
 Send Thou to meet them, and Thyself be present
 Saying, “Welcome home, dear friend, well-
 belovèd son !”

Give them, gentle Jesus, Lord of Humanity,

Just enough oblivion to forget their mother's tears ;
 For tears always dropping wound the soul's en-
 wrapping,
 Vexing and disturbing through the long waiting
 years.

Grant, O gentle Jesus, Lord and Son of Mary,

That Thine be the Hands to lead us to our sons.
 May we hear Thee say, “Poor mothers, for that
 you have suffered,
 I give you back your conquerors, God's belovèd
 ones !”

Peace

(Written on the night of June 1st, 1902, on the arrival of the news)

Peace to the anguished mother,
 Peace to the weary wife,
 Peace to the hearts long burdened
 With the rack and strain of strife.
 Peace ! The dove, olive-freighted,
 Over the waves has sped.
 Peace to the noble living,
 Peace to the splendid dead.

“Let there be light, and
 there was light”

“Let there be light, and there was light !”

That was a beautiful word.
 Though no one can tell what answered,
 Something answered and heard.

Something flashed through the darkness,
 Something gleamed through the night.
 Henceforth, when darkness is deepest,
 God says, “Let there be light.”

Light in the terrible places
 Where the evil spirits dwell,
 Light which sends them cowering
 Back to the haunts of Hell.

Light in the dreary homesteads,
 Light where the dark fiends trod,
 Light to the heart pain-darkened,
 “Let there be light,” saith God.

The Hosts of Christ

(A Dream)

I stood alone in a dreary land,
A lonely desert on either hand,
Barren, desolate rocks overhead,
I wondered, "Is this the Land of the Dead?"

Into the silence there seemed to grow
Whisperings, murmurings faint and low—
The measured breathing of those who slept,
The bitter moaning of those who wept.
Then came on the air the chill shrill cry
Of those who from nameless terrors fly ;
And deep in my inner soul I said,
"This is the waiting Land of the Dead."

They hurried by me, a frightened band,
Hurrying by through the terrible land ;
Some were halting, and some were blind,
Some were cruel, and some were kind ;
Some were laughing the laugh of scorn,
Some were still as the babe unborn ;
On some of their faces an awful dread—
Knowing that this was the Land of the Dead.

One by one they passed me by :
"God," I murmured, "Is this to die ?
God forgive me for all I have done
Ever of evil under the sun.
What is my place in this land of doom ?
Would I were safe in an earthly tomb !"

Here an old man worn and grey,
 Here a maiden fair as the day,
 Here a youth in his splendid prime,
 Here a woman untouched by time,
 Here a child, and a babe—ah me !
 Who tends the babes of Eternity ?

Hurrying by, hurrying by,
 “ O God, O God, is it this to die ?
 May I not rest
 On the quiet breast
 Of Earth my mother ?—Thou knowest best.”

“ Thou knowest best.” In a moment’s span
 I ceased to know myself mortal man ;
 Knew that I stood where seldom trod
 A living man who has looked on God ;
 And if it were but the back of the throne,
 Surely that man his Heaven has known.

Lo, in a moment—no fancy steals
 Faint on my spirit—a flash reveals
 The faces of all those men and women
 Whose burdens were earthly and crudely human
 Lit with ineffable nameless peace ;
 For their tired souls had found release
 From all the travail and all the sorrow
 In the calm of a life that is never To-morrow,
 Always To-day in its utter peace :
 God grant my spirit a like release !

And I saw those women and men time-worn
 Laugh in the light of that wondrous morn ;
 The baby stretched out its arms to the mother,
 And the sister greeted her childhood’s brother.

Then a martial note, and a firm quick tread.
 (Can this, I said, be the march of the Dead ?)
 They came in a host, those strong-armed ones,
 Lovers, and brothers, and mothers' sons ;
 They saw not the wounds in heart and head,
 They saw not the flowing stream of red,
 For I was alive, and they were dead.
 Not dead ! 'not dead ! For I heard a voice
 Crying, " Brave comrades, rejoice, rejoice !
 To-day you shall join the host of the Lord."
 They raised their voices with one accord,
 And Earth became as a fog, a mist,
 As they stood to salute their Captain—Christ.

Their battles of life were over and done,
 Their battles of life were nobly won,
 Their place was now in that mighty host
 Ruled by Christ and the Holy Ghost.

For a while I lowly fell on my face ;
 About me there seemed an infinite space.
 Whether alive, or whether dead,
 I know not, but truly my soul had fled
 From Earth to where man has seldom trod,
 And had knelt at the very feet of God.

Atonement

Then Vera moved a little space,
 Knowing he could not choose but speak,
 Seeing the beauty of her face
 On which the white tears fell apace.

He listened as the soft tears fell
 Like summer rain upon her breast,
 Each tear rang in his soul a knell
 That echoed fathoms deep in Hell.

And Vera spoke not for a while ;
 Then through the awful silences
 He saw the flicker of her smile
 And knew his soul, by hers, was vile.

At last she spoke ; her voice was calm
 And level as a desert plain
 Through which there breathes the scent and balm
 From far-off lands of flowers and palm.

“ Your soul my soul’s beliefs denied,
 Your soul my agony ignored :
 And yet I claim my right as bride,
 My Love, your soul to guard and guide.

“ On your sin, Love, I take my stand,
 I give you all that God gave me ;
 This my one claim—hold out your hand
 That all the Saints may understand.

“ Together in the awful shame,
 But in atonement far apart,
 I take alone the sin, the blame,
 I take your nature and your name.

“ And, Love, be this my one reward—
 That you, redeemed and blest in Heaven,
 Shall once remember, once record—
 Love said the first and final word.”

“ Because true love, as I have given
 To you who loved but for a spell,
 Knows that with true love Hell is Heaven,
 Without it Heaven were Hell.”

A Dream Tryst

Shall we make a tryst in the world of dreams,
 In that wonderful nameless place
 Where all is nothing, and nothing seems
 As the real, and face to face
 We talk of the sorrows the night redeems
 In the dreamland home of space ?

Each head on a distant pillow lies
 Full many a mile apart,
 But quick on the closing of sleepful eyes
 You clasp me heart to heart,
 And the dreams of the day we realise
 Where no let and hindrance thwart.

We live long hours in a moment's span,
 We speak the day's words unsaid,
 We dare in our dreams be woman and man,
 For we are alive, not dead,
 And the faces so lately white and wan
 Are living and loveful and red.

So make a tryst, Love, with me to-night,
 In the land betwixt earth and sun,
 Where, neither with fire nor candle-light,
 Full rivers of live light run.
 To reach it is but a moment's flight
 And the parted two are one.

A Dream

You lay, my dear, among your cushions ;
 Golden your dress as of a King.
 The purple curtains hid the glitter
 Of many a golden ring.

And I, surprised to see you lying
 In golden raiment on a bed,
 Rested upon your shining cushions
 My tired, tired head.

It seemed to me you were a Sultan,
 And I your last and favourite slave ;
 And then my heart, half sick of worship,
 Rebelled at all I gave,

And knew, though you were King or Sultan
 That I, your seeming slave, was Queen ;
 Then straightway on the golden garment
 Fell gleams of faery green.

I, half asleep upon the cushions,
 In long and trailing black array,
 Knew not if I were 'wake or dreaming,
 Or if 'twere night or day.

Your fingers slowly traced the likeness
 Of mystic figures on my face :
 First, " One " ; I said, " this is the token
 Of one year of Love's grace."

Then " Two " ; and I in sleep half smiling,
 Murmured, as one in happy dreams,
 " Dearest, in life two are but lonely :
 'Twere best ' We three,' meseems."

Then slowly came the magic number
 As sweet as kisses on my eyes,
 And I without reluctance welcomed
 The third dear thought arise.

And then the "Four." The love was doubled :
 Had Love, then, nothing more to give ?
 " If so," I said, " this is the moment
 When we should die, not live."

Slowly the kind caressing fingers
 Drew down my brow the half of " Five "
 But swift I woke to earth and knowledge
 That I was yet alive.

Ah, what will be the fate completing
 That broken number ? Let it keep—
 Dear, think you one of us was dreaming,
 Or both of us asleep ?

" Prince, dear Dog "

(Died Sept. 24, 1902, " After seven years ")

My heart to your heart a song is singing,
 Knowing full well, wherever you be,
 Around us and round you the thoughts are clinging
 Of a seven years' memory.

What though you could not answer our speaking
 In words articulate, clear as our own ?
 I think you knew that our hearts were aching
 When you went away alone.

Oft comes the fancy that you are by us,
 All unconscious of death dividing ;
 That the faithful presence is ever nigh us,
 And the faithful love abiding.

What of your soul that looked with passion,
 With speechless longing through mournful eyes,
 Expressing your love for us in fashion
 That never, with dying, dies ?

We left you softly to rest with flowers ;
 Many a tear fell where you lay.
 We shall meet you, perchance, in immortal hours
 As you left us that autumn day.

The Ruby Heart

“What shall I buy that will not brea ?
 What shall I buy for my true love’s sake ?”

“Buy her a rose as red as fire,
 Red and hot with a heart’s desire.
 Buy her a lily pure and cold——”

“That is the gift for a life grown old,
 When the flame of the rose has wasted away
 To the ashes and cinders of yesterday.”

“Buy her a cup of the Sacrament
 Ere the wine is drunk, and the prayer unspent ;
 She will drink in time to the dregs and lees,
 But first for a while she will drink heart’s-ease,
 Heart’s-ease coloured like red, red wine,
 For the human need and the thirst divine.

“Buy her a necklace of opal and flame,
 And a ring whose gems will spell your name—
 Name that will pass as you will pass,
 For what is life but the swift-shorn grass?—
 And the gems will be living when you are dead,
 The gems unbroken, the cypher read.

“You may give her bracelets and storied rings,
 Or even your love of immortal things ;
 But if she crave for that gift apart—
 The ruby red of a mother’s heart,
 The heart that is full of a living fire,
 Of measureless love and of brave desire,
 Tell her that sorrow has long bespoken
 The heart of a mother, made to be broken.”

A Lost Star-stone

Only a stone
 Dropped in a river ;
 What of the stone,
 And what of the giver ?

Only a stone
 Lost from a ring ;
 Who shall consider
 So slight a thing ?

The stone has a star
 Hidden for ever
 Under the waves
 Of a cold, cold river.

There is a woman
 Dwelling apart ;
 The star of the stone
 Dwelt in her heart.

What of the stone ?
 Shall one forget ?
 What of the giver ?
 Her star has set.

“ Sic transit Gloria Mundi ”

Two keys, and a silver cross,
 Happy gain, and utter loss.

With my keys I open ways
 Leading on to golden days,

And a life's unstinted measure
 Of the world's beguiling pleasure.

But I know the cross of pain
 Points where joy and love are vain.

Little keys and little cross,
 This world's gain and this world's loss.

When the last long shadows spread
 From the lamp-light on the bed,
 When you hear the stern voice call—
 “ You have lived ! ”—and that is all,
 “ Sic transit ! ” then, insistent sign,
 Let the victory be thine.

A Song

'Tis sweet to lie awake in the night
 And let my fancy free
 To think of the man that I love best,
 And the man who best loves me.
 Two they are, and never the same,
 For how should it ever be
 That one and the same is the man I love
 With the man who best loves me ?
 And I dream of a night when I shall lie
 With heart and with soul at rest,
 Knowing at last that the one I love
 Is the one who loves me best.

Sorrow-born

This is the song that is born of sorrow,
 Begun to-day and ended to-morrow
 Since the world began
 And woman and man
 Loved to-day and wearied to-morrow.
 For the love that lasts is no love at all,
 Hidden away under friendship's pail ;
 Friendship will last
 As in ages past,
 But the hour of love is best of all.
 Take, oh take my friendships away !
 Hide them deep from the light of day.
 Give me an hour
 Of passion's power
 Instead of the love that lasts away.

A Last Word

Ah, Love ! what words were these ?
 Through the sighing of the breeze
 I heard your spirit call,
 Through the dark stems of the trees—
 Was that all ?

Had you nothing more to say
 When you passed upon your way
 To peace and perfect rest ?
 “ I love you, Love,” to-day
 Was confessed.

But you answered through the sighing
 Of the night winds downward dying,
 “ Ah, Love ! it is too late.”
 Then you heard my soul replying,
 “ Love can wait.”

Love's Scourge

Have you seen the bud the late frost catches
 As it breaks to blossom ?
 Have you seen the flower the east wind snatches
 From the earth's bosom ?
 Have you seen the ripening corn-field stricken
 By the thunder shower ?
 Have you seen the delicate love-gift sicken
 Beneath Death's power ?
 Have you seen the heart for a blessing given
 Shattered and broken ?
 Mercy and Hope in vain have striven
 When Love has spoken.

Heart of my Heart, Soul of my Soul

Heart of my heart, soul of my soul,
 You are long, long a-dying ;
 Do you not hear me calling you,
 Through the wild winds crying,
 Soul of my soul ?

Soul of my soul, heart of my heart,
 Do you not dream of me fretting ?
 Waiting through endless lonely days,
 Fearing you are forgetting,
 Heart of my heart ?

“ Heart of my heart ? ” I ask of those
 Who guard the souls that enter
 Into this dreary lonesome land.
 Round thee my longings centre,
 Soul of my soul.

.

Heart of my heart, the days are passing ;
 Has my hair grown white in these barren days ?
 Have my eyes lost all their passion-light
 Since I walked in unaccompanied ways,
 Soul of my soul ?

Soul of my soul, I stretch towards you
 Hands of entreaty, wrung with pain ;
 Love, have you found another lover ?
 And shall I never, never again
 Be heart of your heart ?

Dear Heart, I care not what future ages
 Hold in reserve for you, for me,
 So long as I still am your own belovèd
 And you my lover in lives to be,
 Soul of my soul,
 Heart of my heart.

'Tween Bats'-flight and Cock-crow

I would but say in perfect song
 What none but I had said ;
 And then I think 'twere better far,
 Far better, to be dead.

Far better lie in dim still earth
 With all my sinnings done,
 Than live, long-wedded, to regret
 In the hard light of the sun.

And I would rather, rather far
 Be once your own true love
 Than dwell in any holy star
 And walk with saints above.

The moonlight falls, the moonlight falls
 My narrow cold grave over.
 What coffin-lid or graveyard walls
 Shall keep me from my lover ?

Between bats'-flight and first cock-crow
 Throw your closed casement wide,
 And we will clasp and kiss awhile,
 The lover and the bride.

And when, at cock-crow, I must creep
 Back to my lonely bed,
 Will any angels grudge my love
 The hour I was not dead ?

Twilight

(On a drawing by Violet Jacob)

The Lady of the Twilight and the Silence,
 Her grey gown sewn with many a half-lit star—
 How comes she, and how goes she, and oh ! whither ?
 Afar, afar.

Do other worlds than these know her, my Lady,
 Her eyes grown strange with gaze on moon and
 star,
 Unmindful of the daylight and the sunlight,
 Here or afar ?

In those mysterious eyes dwell distant shadows
 Of those who love and part,—Good-bye, sad star
 That watches over destinies of lovers,
 Near and afar.

Keep one more hour for me of tender twilight
 When I may see, half veiled, the things that are
 Only expressed by my sweet Love of Silence
 'Neath twilight star.

O Twilight Lady, Lady of all Silence !
 Whose gown is sewn with many a half-lit star.
 The mist is calling, and she may not hearken,
 Nor near, nor far.

The Flight of the Nestlings

The birds have forsaken the nest,
 And the mother-bird may rest :
 There is rest for every one
 When the task is over—is done,
 Dark after light.

The story is written, is told
 Now as in days of old,
 And in days to be born, no need
 Except to bid God-speed
 To the nestlings' flight.

Out in the world they go,
 And the mother alone may know
 How fond is the love that leads them,
 How heartsore the love that speeds them
 Forth to their fate.

And even her last God-speeding
 Falls upon ears unheeding—
 Just as in days of old—
 Before her story was told
 She would not wait.

The Altar of Love

(The Evening Before her Marriage)

Sylvia Alone

“ Ah ! love, we two have waited
 For many a weary year,
 And only God has listened
 To what but God may hear—
 The heart-cry of the woman
 To the one her heart holds dear.

“ Up in the secret heavens
 Is a fair altar-place ;
 There standeth an archangel
 Whose great wings hide his face
 While he listens to the weepings
 Of Earth's sad woman-race ;

“ And through the unheeding heavens,
 Through courts by seraphs trod,
 Past bands of happy spirits,
 These plaints go up to God.
 And the great archangel lays them
 Upon the altar fires
 Which sanctify and cleanse them
 From the taint of Earth's desires.
 Throughout these years how many
 Of my sad prayers have passed
 Through the purifying fires
 To the heart's wish gained at last !

(The Clock Strikes Four)

"The dawn is red o'er the hills
 Where we two have strayed,
 The clock strikes the hour from the church
 Where we two have prayed.
 Now I pray alone, dearest, for you.
 To-morrow we two
 Shall be one evermore. So good-morrow,
 My heart's love, to you."

(Afterwards)

Husband and Wife

"Oh, Sweet," he said, "at last, at last."
 "Ah! yes," she said, "I love the past,
 With all its anguish and unrest,
 Because it led to you."
 His hands her golden hair caressed,
 Her head lay softly on his breast,
 And the love of old seemed new;
 For each did walk in a shining road
 Which guided straight to the fair abode
 Of the souls whose love is true.

(After Years)

Sylvia Alone

"Dear, you are still unsatisfied,
 And yet it seemed at first,
 To both of us, love was enough—
 We who had known the worst
 Of love denied and incomplete,
 Shunning a love accurst.

“And is love still enough for us ?
 To one—ah ! yes—to me.
 ’Tis for your sake, not mine, I crave
 Denied maternity.
 Yes, crave it, though a child, I know,
 The mother’s death must be.

“I may not give to my belov’d
 The sign, the sweetest sign,
 That I have given my life to him,
 That he is wholly mine.
 Oh ! harsh words ringing in my head,
 ‘ Sylvia a mother—Sylvia dead.’

“I cannot bear to see his face
 When children, passing by,
 Remind him that we two, long wed,
 Childless must live and die.

“Oh ! cruel, clamouring words that keep
 Me, tired and heartsick, from my sleep—
 ‘ Sylvia a mother—Sylvia dead !’
 Yes, that is what my mother said
 That they had told her ; with surprise
 Lurking in their dispassionate eyes
 That one who has all joy of life,
 Beauty and honour, loved as wife,
 Should risk it all and choose to die.
 God knows the reason—God and I.”

(A Year Later)

“Just a little while left,
 Dear, did you but know,
 All you have loved will be
 Under the snow.

“Snow-flakes are falling
Softly to-night,
Yes, I am glad
That my grave will be white.

“God, let the child live,
Costing my life ;
Sweet, sweet were those days—
Husband and wife.

“Sleeping, I watch you
Close at my side—
I, who for your sake
Death have defied.”

(Good-Bye)

“Will you remember in the after days
All my great love for you with tenderness,
When to your heart the living child you press ?
Will you remember all its mother's ways,
And see my love-look in the little face,
And in its eyes a shadow of my tears
So often shed for you throughout the years,
And in its laughter my lost laughter trace ?

“For greater love hath no one more than this,
That one should give up dear life for a friend.
And therefore, dearest, when you hear my knell,
Say, as you bend you o'er me with a kiss,
'This is not of my love a bitter end,
'Because with mother and with child, 'tis well.' ”

A Christmas Carol

When Christ our King, when Christ the Lord of all
men

Deigned to be Mary's babe for a brief spell,
On Motherhood these blessed words descended :
" For Mary's sake, 'tis well."

All hail, this Christmas day, to every mother
Who cradles and caresses her sweet child ;
Because she is a daughter of that Other
Sinless and undefiled.

All hail, to-day, to every sleeping baby
Who wakes and laughs upon his mother's breast,
Because in long past days the Child of Heaven
Found thus His happy rest.

All hail ! Divine, Christ, Lord, who deigned for
mortals
A tender child (as mine and all) to be !
All hail to the sweet Mother, guardian Mother
Of all maternity.

New Year's Eve, 1903

Now at the parting of the ways—
Where all men pause, and some men wait
Watching the opening of the gate
Leading to new and unknown days—

How many pray, how many weep ?
 (Cold tears that fall as wintry rain
 Freezing upon the window-pane)
 While some, unheeding, fall asleep,
 And some, attuned to midnight knell
 Of dying love and dying year,
 Know that we hold a thing most dear
 When we are bidding it Farewell.

Saint Valentine

("Valentine was a Roman priest who is said to have endeavoured to give Christian signification to the old custom of drawing lots in honour of Juno Februata, and thus fixed his own name and festival.")

Christian Names. C. Young.)

Oh, Valentine, Saint Valentine,
 Has no one raised to you a shrine ?
 The lovers' saint, most lenient,
 Watching how lovers came and went
 Their lots to draw, their loves to know—
 For Valentine would have it so.

When Juno Februata, Queen,
 Withdrew herself from Rome, I ween
 She little dreamed a Christian priest
 Would smile upon her pagan feast,*
 With anxious lovers drawing nigh
 To learn their fate by lottery.

The eager new-made Christians pressed,
 Their pagan instincts unrepressed,
 Benignly smiled Saint Valentine,
 His lottery a pagan shrine.
 Matters it 'neath which flag unfurled ?
 Love is the monarch of the world.

* The "Lupercalia"—a feast of Purification held on the 15th of February, at which sacrifices were offered to Juno Februata.

So Valentine, dear Valentine,
 Indulgent Christian Saint, a shrine
 Shall still be yours, on which I lay
 An offering with my love to-day ;
 And greet you, gentle saint of mine,
 My last, my only Valentine.

All Souls' Day

What do the whispering spirits say
 Among themselves on All Souls' Day ?
 On earth 'tis All Souls and November ;
 Think you they love us, and remember
 Just for one day ?

On All Souls' Day the angels wait
 Around the closely guarded gate,
 And open it a little space
 That we may meet them face to face
 On All Souls' Day.

But do the spirits, as they throng,
 Just for a restless moment long
 For human joy, and human pain,
 And wish to be alive again
 On All Souls' Day ?

So now the hour has struck—has sped :
 We cry with longing to our dead,
 And they with calm estrangèd eyes
 Look on us with a new surprise
 Each All Souls' Day.

They have forgotten all this earth—
 The kisses, the tempestuous mirth,
 The sobs, the laughter of the days
 When they, too, walked in mortal ways—
 For many a day.

And some with unreluctant feet
 Return their Paradise to greet,
 And some would linger, kiss and wait
 A little longer—but the gate
 Must shut to-day.

Good-bye, good-bye, a little space
 We are divided face from face
 And heart from heart—not soul from soul,
 Because those close-shut gates unroll
 On All Souls' day.

Love and Death

(The Picture by Watts)

Death spoke the word. Love laughing said, "'Tis
 naught.

Love can defy death." When they came to war

Love heard the war-cry sounding from afar ;

He knew the barriers that his skill had wrought.

Love had much panoply of beauty sought,

Set lovely briar roses 'gainst the door ;

"My thick-set hedge," he said, "will evermore
 Become the symbol of spoil dearly bought "

"Nay, saved," he laughed, "not bought"—but swift
his face

Grew pale as his who by the doorway stood,
His arm upraised from out the trailing shroud,
His head downcast. "Oh, foolish Love! a space
Yours was the kingdom made of flesh and blood,
Mine its corruption; Love, I claim your place."

To the Memory of G.

(Oct. 30, 1903)

Beyond the stars, beyond the suns,
In countries where no mortals dwell,
Beloved, on whom God's summons fell,
Our love for you is now—not once—
Through avenues of earthly pain
Led to where human sorrows cease.
We will not mar your perfect peace,
But, knowing all is well—refrain.

To the Same

O sister spirit, daughter spirit,
Bride of a most beloved son,
If gentle children do inherit
God's kingdom, surely you were one.
God wanted in His courts of Heaven
Another angel, so He laid
His hand upon you, very gently,
And, very gently, you obeyed.

“The peace of God which passeth all understanding”

(In Memoriam : L. H.)

Oh, too impatient of an ingrate world,
Your true self lying in a late-made grave,
What could convince you, and what words could
 save
A soul through unimagined conflicts hurled ?
Nothing. 'Twas Fate who with her banner furled,
Red as your blood, knew well that this must be.
Ah, rest in peace, and all the poetry
Will linger. When yon wearied body, swirled
Through expiating tortures, learned the road
 Leading to other regions, one was near
To hold your hand, say “Daughter, do not fear ;”
To look with vision comprehending, broad,
He to whom all imprisoned souls are dear,
And walk beside you as the Son of God.

The Message from the Dead

This is the message she left behind her
When she smiled and left us ; and no one knows—
We may seek for a life-time and shall not find her
Through coral islands and northern snows.
She has pitched her tent—ah, God knows where,
And she smiled, and thought we should not care.

“All my life I have given for others”

(These are the words of the message read)—

“The heart that was aching, the laugh that smothers
The wrecked illusions, the passions dead.

Now I am going—longing to go—

The heart that has loved and suffered so.

“Who shall tell where the lost soul wanders

Soul that wooed you, soul that you spurned ?

What becomes of the soul that squanders

All its love, with no guerdon earned ?

Ah, you will ask me perhaps one day,

Or else never meet me—who shall say ?

“Shall I meet some gentle wandering spirit

With compassionate love in the quiet eyes

Saying, ‘We reap as we sow ; what merit ?

And God will never a one despise

Who hath borne such sorrow.’ Ah well, the rest

The spirit will say, and you have guessed.

“I am one with the wind and one with the sun-
gleam,

One with the splash of the wavelet’s spray,

One with the tender light of the moonbeam—

Well, I have lived—I have had my day ;

But I missed the knowledge of human bliss—

A passionate thrill, and a true love’s kiss.”

In Memoriam

(February 21, 1905)

TO MY FATHER

As we watch the flight of an eagle
 Cleaving its way afar,
 As we know when the clouds dividing
 Reveal the rush of a star,

So we on the earth abiding
 Stand where the feet have trod
 Of one, who as eagle fearless,
 As star-like, has found his God.

And the gates of Heaven have opened,
 If it is but a little space,
 To tell us that he has entered
 And met God face to face.

To the Same

(Feb. 21, 1906)

When the moon rises over the water
 And the sounds of earth are sweet—
 The roar of the stag in the gloaming,
 Or the young lamb's tender bleat—
 Then my heart is sore for a presence
 Who loved at close of day
 To leave his books and his learning
 And be out on his lands away.

For he heeded not the ice-hail,
 And he heeded not the blast,
 And he loved the earth God-given—
 God grant such love may last
 In the hearts of those who loved him !
 His presence is here to-day,
 And we feel his thoughts are with us
 Though he may be far away.

Lands of Promise

Lands of Promise, Lands of Promise,
 What are we that we should say
 There are never Lands of Promise
 Over hills and far away,
 Blessed, golden Lands of Promise
 Over hills and far away ?

Were it certain, Lands of Promise,
 We should hap on you in quest,
 Oh, what weary bands of pilgrims
 Would be hurrying to their rest,
 Tired of this world's forlornness,
 Praying for a perfect rest !

Glimpses of your blue horizon,
 Visions of your scented glades,
 Of the sunlight of your mornings,
 Of your evening's quiet shades,
 Lands of Promise, we shall find you,
 Rest us in your noontide shades.

Lands of Promise, hope benignant,
 Let us find in you our rest ;
 Oh, we very tired pilgrims
 Ever eager on the quest,
 We shall find you, Lands of Promise,
 Lands of Promise, Lands of Rest.

All Saints' Day

Sons and daughters of the morning
 Greet we you this All Saints' Day.
 Annals of this world adorning,
 Are ye very far away ?
 Are ye near us ? All our homage
 At your hallowed shrines we pay.

Every household has its altar
 Lit with an undying flame ;
 When our spirits quail and falter
 Murmur we each well-loved name.
 They are calling past the shadows,
 Past the anguish and the blame.

Rosemary we lay in fancy
 On your shrines, and herb of grace,
 Many a lily and a pansy—
 Could we see you face to face !
 Oh, our Saints, do you remember
 Love that Death cannot efface ?

Gethsemane

What flowers grew in that strange place
 Where blood, dropped from a holy face,
 Bedewed stark roots of olive-tree ?
 Strange flowers, purple, dark and red ;
 And for long years did gardeners dread
 The red soil of Gethsemane.

All weary, weary pathways wend
 To this sad glade where journeys end,
 No matter how we shrink or flee ;
 End in long reaches of pale pain,
 When on each soul there falls again
 The shadow of Gethsemane.

So red the soil, the very flowers
 Are children of those anguished hours—
 Passion-flower and anemone.
 Never a rose, nor nightingale,
 But only human cries that wail
 Through dark groves of Gethsemane.

Ah me, the tortured souls that pass,
 Leaving their footsteps on the grass
 Watered by drops of agony !
 Did He, who suffered and who bore
 The pains of earth for evermore
 Know every soul's Gethsemane ?

“Tout Lasse, Tout Casse, Tout Passe”

“Tout lasse, tout casse, tout passe,”
 This is our human cry, alas !
 The leaves fall browning on the grass,
 “Tout passe, tout casse, tout lasse !”

And summer comes again with flowers,
 But we have lived this life of ours,
 Should Fate still send some golden hours,
 “Tout lasse, tout passe, tout casse.”

The ripe rose drooping on its stem—
 Pluck its full glories, bury them ;
 It has been—as your love, alas !
 “Tout passe, tout lasse, tout casse.”

And in all days to come we be
 Puppets of heedless destiny ;
 But only one thing's sure, alas !
 “Tout lasse, tout casse, tout passe.”

Etsi “Mutabile”

What though, my dear, I know your faults,
 Seeing your tenderness and charm,
 Could any prudish prim assaults
 My love and loyalty disarm ?

Be what you are, and never change ;
 Another woman could not be
 A little luxury of range,
 Or just the one and all to me.

As, wandering in a wilderness,
 We hap on something startling, wild,
 I love your unexpectedness
 My dear, and always lawless, child.

When we are old

When we are old, my love—yes, quite, quite old—
 And Death is tapping at the window-pane
 And asking, “ Will you live it all again,
 Or will you come with me into the cold ? ”—
 And cold it will be, very cold, my dear—

How shall we answer ?—“ Go away, dear Death ;
 We know you for a sweet friend in disguise,
 And yet we would keep life in any wise,
 And know the breath we draw is human breath :
 The icy breath of other worlds we fear ”—

Shall you say this, my love ? Ah no, not so.
 The coldness would not be than life more cold.
 When you and I are growing tired and old
 I think that we shall be full glad to go,
 Hands clasped in Death’s hands—even so, my
 dear.

Compensation

She had played with fortune, had played with power,
 And Love was to her as a harmless boy ;
 But there came the day and the bitter hour
 When Love was a conqueror, made to destroy.

Then she stood aghast at her desperate fate,
 " Ah ! what is left me now Love is fled ? "
 But there came to her heart, left desolate —
 That God is living, though Love be dead.

Salvage

For evermore, for evermore
 The heart-springs broken at the core :
 And though we laugh and smile and fret,
 We know we never can forget—
 All lost ! all lost !

The happy rapture of the days,
 The little trivial blame and praise,
 The striving after things ideal,
 The deep-drained rapture of the real—
 All lost ! all lost !

Where goes the striving and the pain,
 The short-lived laughter checked again
 In sorrow's bitter, bitter sea
 Where all things cluster, all things be
 Not lost ! not lost ?

Let all men heed the truth that none
 With ease can deem the world well won ;
 For joy, like seaweed, loves to float
 Just beyond reach of life's small boat,
 All lost ! all lost !

Fate grant to you, fate grant to me
 One glimmer of the summer sea ;
 And then the storm, the driving rain,
 And one drear thought must still remain,
 All lost ! all lost !

Perhaps, at last, a perfect peace
 May bid the tireless anguish cease ;
 And tortured hearts may cease to be
 The wreckage of an angry sea.
 One little deed, one little prayer
 May leave its impress anywhere—
 Not lost ! not lost !

What is to follow ?

Before the day has half-way run
 Come hints of setting of the sun.
 And work is done, and love is done ;
 What is to follow ?

I have loved a little, and sorrowed after ;
 A light ray through a gloomy rafter,
 A tear that hides in the eyes of laughter ;
 What is to follow ?

The Preacher said, " Under the sun
 There is nothing new " : his days had run,
 Finished and worn before begun ;
 What is to follow ?

A life to dream in, a life to love in—
 Like the trembling cobwebs the spiders spin,
 The spiders laugh, for the spiders win—
 What is to follow ?

A love begins with a kiss and endeth,
 Such is the good the high God sendeth,
 He knoweth where each pathway endeth ;
 What is to follow ?

A Heaven of glory for duty done,
 A high reward for a victory won,
 A long, long sleep for a tired one
 She prays may follow.

A House of Mystery

(Suggested by Rudyard Kipling's "They")

There is a very lonely house
 Where little footsteps come and go
 Restless and furtive—rat and mouse
 Perhaps the secret know.

What lights the windows half the night ?
 What waves the curtains in the room ?
 Who suddenly turns out the light
 And all again is gloom ?

Whence comes the sound of carriage wheels
 Upon the unkempt gravel road,
 When hurrying passers-by but feel
 Something unblessed of God ?

Who tends the weedy garden plot
 Where grow the angry thistle flowers ?
 No roses or forget-me-not
 Of gentle Eden bowers.

Who watches at the break of day,
 And throws the doors and casements wide ?
 Can no one guess, can no one say
 What strange Thing dwells inside ?

Ghosts

In the quiet street they come,
 Unobtrusive, noiseless, dumb.

Some with hands held out to space,
 Some o'ershadowing the face.

Some with tender care who guide
 Little children at their side.

Some with looks of agony,
 Scanning the remorseless sky.

Some with calm and resignation,
 Knowing it for their probation.

Who are they—this company,
 Only seen by starlit sky,

Or by few whose eyes can ken
More than eyes of mortal men ?

Ghosts—sad ghosts ! Oh ! let them glide
Through the street and waterside,

Passing, passing, evermore
By the street, the hill, the shore.

God in time shall rest you, ghosts,
Numbered safe among His hosts.

A Dead Queen's Gown

Cover her closely under the daisies,
Deck her in lilac, a dead queen's gown ;
Let her not rest where a lost God traces
The tomb of a woman shattered down.

Once she had glory, beauty, and honour—
Where is she now—ah ! who knows where ?
All the love that was heaped upon her
Died with the drooping violets there.

Sharp, sweet spring winds and soft September
Bring the flowers where white moths hover,
Asleep in purple, she does not remember
The love that was, the love that is over.

Madame Chrysanthème

(The Flower of October)

Welcome, Madame Chrysanthème,
In storms and battles all the same;
Coming in your kimono,
Red and purple, white as snow,
Glowing orange, golden yellow,
Every colour bright and mellow,
Save one colour, always missed—
Colour of the love-in-mist.

Colour of forget-me-not,
Letters tied in lovers' knot;
Colour of the unattained,
Symbol of sad passions waned,
Emblem of immortal wings,
Colour of celestial things—
Not for us and not for you
Chrysanthèmes or roses blue.

So she in her beauty grows,
Following the dying rose.
As in life our prayers are granted
Save the heart's desire most wanted,
So as well wish Chrysanthème
Blue as ether, blue as flame.

In each soul a garden grows
Cherishing a blue, blue rose
Never into life to blossom,
Hid away in every bosom;

And we think, perhaps we know
 In a blue, blue kimono
 We shall find the flower blown
 In some garden all unknown ;
 But we greet you all the same,
 Gentle Madame Chrysanthème.

The Shrine in the Jungle

In the sun-kissed heart of the desolate jungle
 (Say was it well, love, say was it well ?)
 Your eyes reflected the green of the jungle,
 And the tank where the faery fishes dwell.

All savage things that dwell in the jungle,
 Having their home there, breed and abide ;
 They possessed your heart in the soul of the jungle,
 You, my desire, my dream, my bride.

The jackal peered through the tangled jungle ;
 His wild eyes lit in your eyes a gleam,
 Woke in your eyes the soul of the jungle,
 A backward memory, love, or dream.

His homeless eyes that searched through the jungle
 Sought a home in your eyes that day,
 And just for a while the spell of the jungle
 Turned your heart from my heart away.

But I called your name—he was lost in the jungle—
 And your eyes to mine grew languorous, still,
 And I knew that my Love in the desolate jungle
 Would yield herself to my passionate will.

The tiny snakes that glide through the jungle,
 Peeping and leering with treacherous eyes,
 Rustled through parched and brown-leaved jungle,
 Seeking their lost home—Paradise.

The Bougainvillia, loved of the jungle,
 Spread herself like a purple shroud,
 And the scarlet blossom that burns the jungle
 Seemed in her splendour to laugh aloud.

There was a temple within that jungle—
 The fires were ashes, the strange gods fled ;
 But we plighted our troth on the shrine in the jungle,
 And clasped and kissed over tombs of the dead.

The Kites swooped over our heads in the jungle—
 Their shriek and scream was our bridal hymn ;
 From afar we heard the beasts of the jungle,
 And you clasped me closer as day grew dim.

What of the night and the love of the jungle—
 Perchance to-morrow the wild beasts' prey ?
 We have been one with the soul of the jungle—
 What did we reck of the coming day ?

We have lived and loved through a night in the jungle—
 Let the world and the wild beasts work their will,
 Body and soul have kissed in the jungle
 From scarlet sunset to twilight thrill.

Sappho's Last Song

Then Sappho took her little lute
 To which so oft her songs she sung
 That melody and music clung
 When hands were still and voice was mute.

"Oh, I have loved, and never more
 Than Clëis * sweet, than whom less dear
 Is Lesbos, for all love is here,
 And fame is much, and love is sore.

"Yes, many love me ; but it seems
 As if all else were hid away
 With memories of a long past day,
 And idle kisses, futile dreams,

"With this last love. That I am Queen
 Is less to him than if I were
 Some market-girl with curly hair—
 That such should be ! that such has been !

"Will Clëis in the after years
 Think of her mother without blame,
 Forgive that I have stooped to shame,
 Love unrequited, washed with tears ?

"O Phaon, when I saw you climb,
 Leading your flocks, then all renown
 And love of fame fell sharply down
 As you came treading o'er the thyme.

* "I have a fair daughter
 With a form like a golden flower,
 Clëis, the beloved, above whom I [prize]
 Nor all Lydia nor lovely [Lesbos]"

*Translation from fragment of "Sappho." See "Sappho," by
 H. D. Wharton, 3rd Edition, p. 136.*

“What though my soul cry from the tomb?
 The poet of all days to be?
 Yet you disdained me! Well for me
 That I should evermore be dumb.

“My heart is dead—at eventide,
 When past me heedless Phaon goes,
 I shall no longer care who knows
 How Sappho suffered, sung, and died.”

The Lost Arms of the Venus of Milo

Where are the arms, O beautiful lady,
 Arms that are lost, as fair things be?
 Buried in sand under ruined temples
 In a mystic Isle in a far-off sea?

Beautiful drooping head and bosom,
 Where are the arms so oft-times flung
 Round the neck of a warrior burning for battle
 With ardour kindled as white arms clung?

Now through the strife and dismay of ages
 You smile with your sweet, inscrutable eyes;
 And when we are dead the deathless Venus
 Will long not for Pagan or Christian skies.

But we yearn for the arms and delicate fingers
 That clasped the lover and wove the yarn,
 Like Helen of old—the sea-brown purple—
 Delicate fingers that weave and darn.

Soft round arms where perchance a baby—
 Child of a god—with its soft curls lay ;
 For a face like my lovely lady of Milo
 Could light and smile at a young child's play.

Arms that were fashioned for rocking cradles,
 Arms to enslave a warrior king,
 Where are those lovely arms, O lady ?
 Are you not wholly a living thing ?

In the Day of Days, when all loves are ending,
 Which of your lovers shall claim the right
 To be clasped again by the lady of Milo—
 Clasped by those arms long lost to sight ?

Can you see the lips that were formed for kisses
 Smile as she thinks of her broidery loom,
 And the lost arms tingling to clasp the lover
 In the scented dusk of the shadowy room ?

And she will remember the lover's baby
 Who once in those arms and that bosom lay,
 When she has forgotten the bold, brave lover,
 And the arms that enslaved him are lost for aye.

Half-awakened Souls

There are some on this passing pilgrimage
 Whose souls are but half awake ;
 They strive for the good they cannot find,
 They know not the way they take.
 Oh God, be pitiful to one
 Whose soul is half awake !

It gropes like a child in a twilight room
 Unable its way to fare,
 It fingers gladly inanimate things,
 It knows not how to dare ;
 And it longs in a dim, inarticulate way,
 Too childish to despair.

Sometimes into its life there comes
 A shock which wakes it quite :
 Dazed and appalled, it stands alone
 Lost in an utter night ;
 And such a soul must softly go
 Till Death puts all things right.

Then, perhaps, at the end of life
 An angel waits to take
 The soul that is frightened to find itself
 For the first time quite awake,
 And soothes it with gentle words and wise,
 Lest the frail mind snap and break.

These half-awakened souls are those
 Who often find in sin
 Their happiest hours, and never know
 There are higher joys to win.
 Condemn them not—God's innocents—
 He knows, and will let them in.

Be sure when they know, and the scales have fallen
 From their dim, bewildered eyes,
 And the soul has found its new-waked half,
 It will bitterly realise
 The wasted life ;—but the God who knows
 Will heal, and not despise.

The Wise Man and the Fool

The heart of the wise man said to the fool,
 "Far happier you than I ;
 I know, and I fret over pain, misrule—
 And you let the world go by.

"Would to God that I had been born
 Foolish, and free from care ;
 For the heart of the foolish heeds no scorn,
 And he knows not the word 'Beware.'"

Then the fool he answered, "O you, so wise,
 Are sometimes to error prone ;
 But the God who made me has truer eyes
 And specially guides His own.

"And if in the tiring wisdom of life
 The wise man craves for rest,
 The calm of the fool may soothe his strife,
 And let his fancies rest.

"As the shadows cast by a little reed
 May soften the burning pool,
 So the wise man finds in his utmost need
 There is calm and rest in a fool."

The Wise Wee Mannie

What said the wise wee mannie ?
 "Guid man, what d'ye do
 The lee-lang day till nicht time ?"
 "I've wark to warstle through."

“What’s your wark ?” speired the mannie
 O’ the lad rinning through
 The heapit gowden corn-riggs :
 “I’ve just schule to do.”

He cried to the puir auld wife,
 “Sure, but ye’ve warked eno’.”
 “Guid sake !”—and she turned the bannocks—
 “There’s yet to milk the coo !”

“Wark !” said the wise wee mannie,
 “Wark !—what’s to do ?
 Hech ! here’s a bonnie lassie,
 An’ what’s the wark for you ?”

“There’s orra wark a hantle,
 Its shawin’ neeps the noo—
 But fegs ! I hae the gloaming
 The weary wark through.”

“An’ in the gloaming, lassie,
 What hae ye to do ?”
 “I’ve just to meet my laddie
 An’ gie’ a kiss or two.”

Lauched the wise wee mannie,
 “Ay ! lassie, true ;
 Gae tak your fill o’ pleasure
 When a’ the wark’s through.”

Coming down the Stair

Oh, the night was very chill
 (Coming down the stair),
 But I went with right good-will
 (All down the stair).

With a kerchief on my head
 (Coming down the stair),
 Eyes were bright and cheeks were red
 (Coming down the stair).

All the world was laughing loud
 (As I trod the stair),
 But I was the Ladye proud
 (Coming down the stair).

He was waiting for his bride
 (Down the secret stair),
 Postern gate unguarded, wide
 (By the secret stair).

.
 Many a gladsome day was sped
 (And he blessed the stair),
 Now the cheeks are white, once red
 (As I trod the stair).

Now the love has suffered change
 (Since I trod the stair),
 Every blessing takes revenge
 (Up and down a stair).

Old and New Year

(1905-6)

Louder and louder the wild bells moan
 As he lays him down 'neath his burial stone ;
 Taking with him the burden of sorrows
 Of which he will ne'er see glad to-morrows ;
 Taking with him the widow's moan
 As she sits and thinks of her love alone ;
 Taking with him the mother's tears,
 The fleeting joys, the hopes, the fears ;
 He had his use, let none despise,
 Truly an angel in disguise.

.
 Gently he comes, the babe new born,
 Child of the unknown, child of morn.
 What does he bring in his hands that cling,
 Bidding the mourners hope for spring ?
 Here is the star of fair prediction,
 This is the New Year's benediction.
 Bowing our heads, let us learn to be
 Worthy the New Year's Destiny.

Inherited

O happy children laughing in the sun,
 Full of sweet radiance, life but just begun !
 How comes it that on each and all there lies
 The sorrow hidden in your mother's eyes ?
 She laughs perchance as carelessly as you ;
 But in your eyes, brown, hazel, golden, blue,
 Beneath the laughter evermore there lies
 The sorrow born within your mother's eyes.

Such eyes as yours that steal men's hearts away,
 Such for a while find life a summer day ;
 But on each one for evermore there lies
 The sorrow born within its mother's eyes.

For she has suffered (though she laughs, and deems
 Sorrow is conquered by some short love-dreams),
 Bequeathing to each child in varying guise
 The sorrow ever living in her eyes.

Ah ! dear and tender Death, close shut them down.
 Ye never saw in them an angry frown ;
 Haply one day in some vague Paradise
 She will divine her grief has left your eyes.

And when ye see her lying still and dead
 These be the words she wishes to be said :
 " We know our mother smiles in glad surprise,
 And sends us now the gladness in her eyes."

La Belle Dame de Merci

Into the silent wood she came,
 Her dress like amber-tinted flame,
 But no man living knows her name—
 La belle Dame de Merci.

She watches lovers come and go,
 Eyes glancing softly, to and fro ;
 In her own eyes the world's wide woe—
 La belle Dame de Merci.

But when the love has come and gone,
 The tortured sufferer lies alone,
 Ah ! then the hour is all her own—
 La belle Dame de Merci.

'Tis hers to comfort and embrace
 All sorely wounded, and efface
 The anguish from the bleeding place—
 La belle Dame de Merci.

She whispers on the battle plain
 To warriors but newly slain,
 Prayers for their souls—not all in vain—
 La belle Dame de Merci.

Or to some eyes still half awake
 The image of his love to take,
 Teaching he died for country's sake—
 La belle Dame de Merci.

She smooths the cloudy barriers,
 And lets love win where judgment errs ;
 Not hers the pride which doubts, demurs—
 La belle Dame de Merci.

And in her violet eyes abide
 Wisdom, compassion, side by side ;
 But she is always Sorrow's bride—
 La belle Dame de Merci.

She knows, whate'er the fates may be,
 There's but one fate for a spirit free
 From self and her own pain to flee—
 La belle Dame de Merci ;

And so in her own arms to take
 All human suffering for love's sake,
 E'en though her heart must ache and break—
 La belle Dame de Merci.

The Leaf

When the hour is gone and the leaf grown brown,
 Its green delight over, far better be down.
 Well if the wind come then and deliver
 The leaf to the earth or the sea-going river.
 What should it do there, outliving its day ?
 Well if the wind come, and blow it away.

Well if the wind stoop down in its force
 When the life is lived out, for better or worse.
 I pray Thee, Lord God, take thought and deliver
 Old age in its time, as the leaf to the river.
 What should it do there, outliving its day ?
 Well if the wind come, and blow it away.

“ Miserere Domine ”

Ages before this world began
 God and His angels imagined Man :
 Something strong, with a restless nature,
 Something with hint of heavenly feature.
 “ Made in Our Image ”—There was silence then :
 Dare the creatures be God-like men ?
 Silence brooded over the deep,
 The Hand of Creation seemed to sleep ;
 And the Spirit waited in absolute space
 While God thought out the human race.

First there was Light. Then, day by day,
 The plants and flowers found their way,
 And the brothers of future Humanity,
 Placed on the earth its slaves to be.
 Looking down on beast or flower or wood
 God saw it was fair, and knew it was good.

Who can imagine those men who came,
 Setting His earth to blood and shame ?
 Who can imagine the first weird woman
 Who then arose, and knew herself human ?
 They have spoilt the earth with their greed and
 shame,
 And they dare to blame—they dare to blame !

God, sitting high on His mercy-seat,
 Hears the pulse of His hard earth beat.
 He has sent His prophets, has sent His Son—
 Men scoffed at His messengers one by one.
 But His mercy is great, His wisdom is high :
 Though they let His prophets and Son go by
 A message will come, a message will come
 When the human race will fall prostrate and dumb :
 “ Lo, the Lord is here !
 We repent, we fear.
 ‘ Miserere Domine ! ’ ”

“ I will give them a New Name ”

A gentle soul stood to be judged,
 Sorrowful and ashamed.
 “ Now name her,” said the Seraphim,
 “ For none come here unnamed.”

A little Cherub hovered near
 To comfort her, and said,
 "You must have had some name on Earth
 Before you were called dead."

"I had some name, 'tis clean forgot—
 It was some name of mirth ;
 But now I want to think no more
 Of weary, torturing Earth."

Then came the Captain of the hosts,
 Seeing her gathering tears,
 And knowing all the bitter tale
 Of her sad earthly years.

The Captain of the hosts was kind,
 And led her to a bower
 Where the Queen of every woman lives—
 The Queen of the dark hour.

The Queen of good and bad alike—
 "Nay, do not shrink from me,
 For I will give you my own name,
 The name of mystery."

Then Mary Mother led her forth
 Into the courts of Heaven :
 "See now, another little child
 To whom my name is given."

And then the hosts of Heaven arose
 And welcomed with acclaim
 The happy God-daughter of Her
 Who bore the mystic name.

The Feast of the Crown of Thorns

He saw that the hungry and sick were fed,
 He gave them of bread and wine ;
 Though His hands were pierced, and the wounds
 still red,
 He laid them in blessing on every head,
 In accordance with God's design.

He divided the food His guests among,
 Alike for all to share,
 The sinner, the ragged, the old, the young,
 Princes from mighty houses sprung—
 Simple and kingly fare.

And the great King wore his noblest crown,
 Fashioned of prickly thorn :
 He knew that the world would gape and frown
 As the blood from the chaplet trickled down
 On the brow of the Virgin-born.

He has many a crown ; but when He trod
 The earth, and stayed to quell
 The woes in magic revealed by God,
 Though as man He shrank from the tyrant's rod,
 Yet He knew that all was well.

And now He is welcoming each guest,
 Seeing the spark divine
 Burning alike in every breast,
 A spark of Himself in bad and best,—
 "For the kingdom," He says, "is mine."

In Arcady

When I am entering the great desolation,
 Lonely and heart-sick, tired of all I see,
 Heedless of passion, dulled to resignation,
 Let me not forget I walked in Arcady.

If with the loss of ardour and ambition
 I must endure the long-drawn lingering breath,
 Live but in dreams, perchance in dire contrition,
 Waiting for my only friend and lover Death ;

If I must dwell, oh, cruelty of fate,
 Captive and hopeless in this enchanted cell,
 Know the soul departing while the body needs must
 wait,
 Living and listening to my own death-knell,

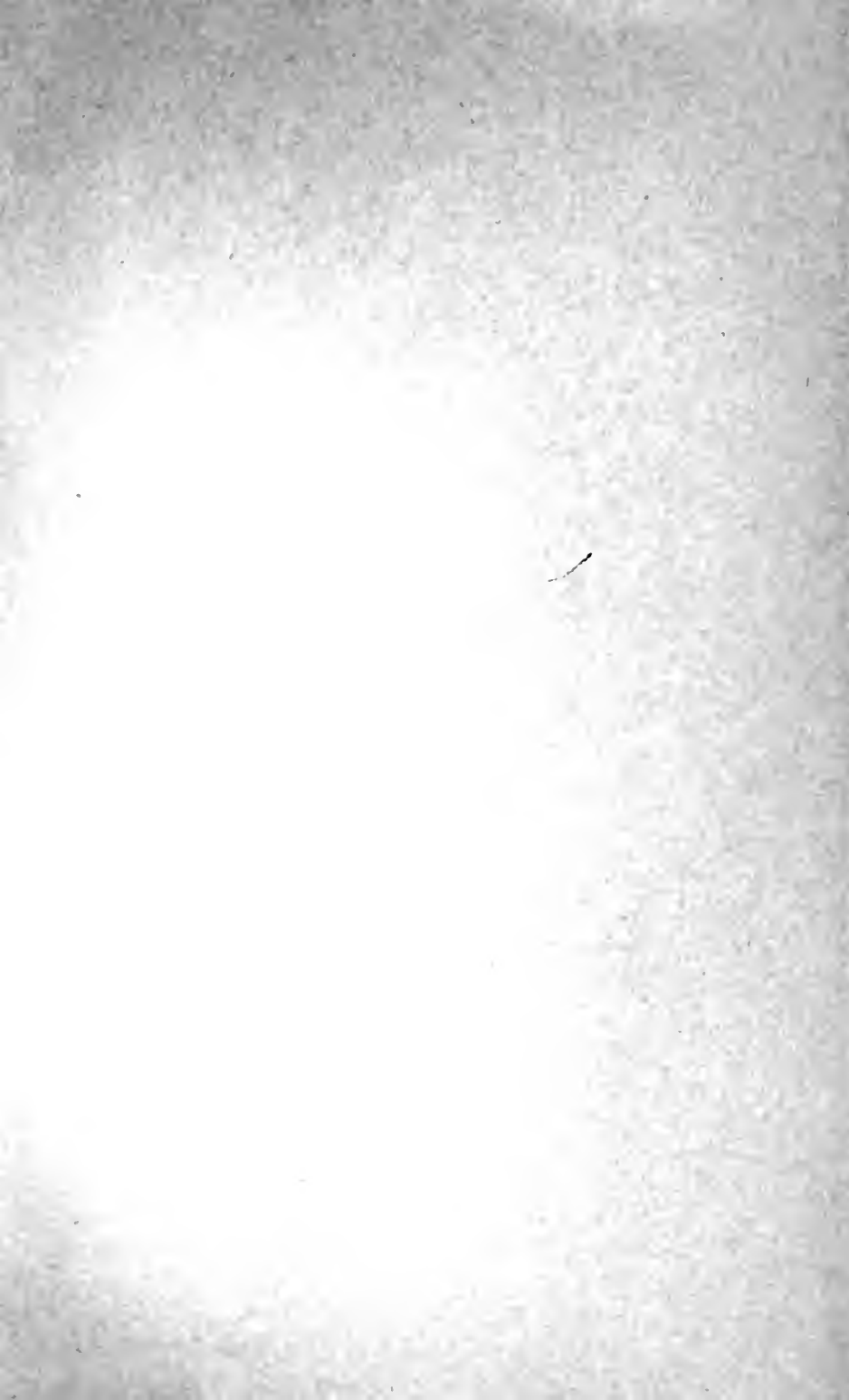
Then, as crowning mercy of remorseless fate,
 Pride will linger with me as I sit and cling
 To mem'ries of the day when we passed the golden
 gate
 You, the lady of the garden, I your minstrel of
 the spring.

Resignation

My feet were set upon the hem of Death,—
 Gold trailing skirts,—his face was turned away,
 I felt the thoughts which through his mind did stray ;
 I heard no sound but that of my own breath,
 As that of one who, tired, laboureth
 Up a steep mountain, making little way.
 I tried to frame a word—to ask to lay
 My weary head upon his heart. The heath
 Around was dark with withered plants and flowers
 Left from dead summers ; not a bird did sing ;
 I found my voice, and prayed, before next spring,
 That he would come and fetch me to bright bowers.
 Then came his word : “Thou hadst thy golden hours,
 Content thee 'neath the twilight's shadowy wing.”

FINIS.





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